

Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature

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Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature

Theorizing a New Taxonomy

By

Paul M. Robertson



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Introduction

This project is an attempt to re-think Paul's letters by providing a new way to describe their form that facilitates transparent, empirical comparison with texts not typically treated by biblical scholars. I argue that the form of Paul's letters is best described by a set of literary characteristics that are shared by certain Greco-Roman, ethical-philosophical texts written at a roughly contemporary time in the ancient Mediterranean, particularly Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*. These literary characteristics are derived from my own readings of Paul's letters alongside a host of ancient Greco-Roman texts and my attempt to distill what defines particular texts from the standpoint of literary style and technique. In doing so, I forward a new taxonomy of Greco-Roman literature in Paul's time that groups Paul's letters together with certain Greco-Roman, ethical-philosophical texts written at a roughly contemporary time. This particular grouping, which I term a socio-literary sphere, is defined by the shared form, content, and social purpose of its constituent texts, as well as certain general similarities between their texts' authors. By grouping texts within socio-literary spheres, I hope to gain new insights into Paul's letters as literature and Paul as writer by comparison with other texts and authors in his socio-literary sphere.

My literary criteria that define the form of texts within Paul's socio-literary sphere are neither the finely tuned syntactical-grammatical characteristics of philologists nor a complete replication of the characteristics found in ancient rhetorical handbooks, though both closely inform my approach. Philological readings are useful, but their strength lies in detailing grammatical minutiae, not classifying literature in broader strokes as I attempt to do here. Ancient rhetorical handbooks are useful for understanding how one particular aristocratic-rhetorical tradition attempted to define its own literary form, but as I will argue Paul's letters and the comparanda herein are best described apart from this aristocratic-rhetorical tradition. My characteristics are as follows: universal claims or assertions such as about the gods, conversation/dialogism, rhetorical questions, metaphors or analogies, anecdotes or examples, imperatives, exhortation, caustic injunctions, pathos, irony or satire, hyperbole, oppositions or choices, figurations of groupness, second person addresses versus plural inclusive addresses (i.e., 'you/your' versus 'we/our'), first person reflections (i.e., 'I/me/my'), analysis of questions or objections, and systematic argument.

My criteria are second-order characteristics describing an author's literary style, and the accuracy of their description will be demonstrated by their

utility in describing and comparing the data in a way that improves on previous approaches. By using second-order criteria, we are able to recognize qualities that were only implicitly accepted and re-presented in ancient texts as well as to compare texts in an empirical, transparent way. Comparison involves distillation and generalization, and both these endeavors benefit from abstracting in a second-order fashion at a remove from the data. My argument is not that Paul and his authorial comparanda were necessarily specifically aware of certain literary characteristics and consciously included them in their writings, but rather that specific types of textual content and goals (what I generally refer to as 'purpose' or 'social purpose') contained social and literary expectations that certain literary characteristics be included. Different kinds of writing (defined by content and purpose) in different historical and social contexts entail specific, often implicit expectations of form: just as modern academic discourse implicitly demands inclusion of characteristics such as footnotes and bibliography, so too did a certain sphere of ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman textual production implicitly demand the presence of the particular characteristics I listed above.

This approach departs from a great deal of Pauline scholarship. Pauline scholars are doubtless familiar with the huge bibliography that largely reinscribes certain understandings of Paul and Paul's letters. These understandings are often essentialized (e.g., Paul as Greek or Jew; Paul's letters as high rhetoric or Jewish apocalyptic; and so on) and thus provide little help in framing Paul within his wider, complex socio-literary milieu. Part of the genesis of my own project was the dissatisfaction with previous attempts to frame and understand Paul and Paul's letters. There are a host of questions that I think are still largely unanswered, or go unasked, within much of the field, but two in particular stand out: 1) What kind of writer was Paul?, and 2) What kind of writings are his letters?

The former question has long been the purview of theologians who have attempted to see Paul's letters as a unique manifestation of a new era in religion and history. Paul in this reading cannot be readily compared, if at all, with his contemporaries. The latter question was probably best exemplified by the noteworthy attempt of Adolf Deissmann to theorize a difference between letters and epistles. The fact that Paul wrote complex, long-form letters has been a particularly difficult issue for scholars, as on the surface they seem different from both other existing letters as well as most other contemporary literature; hence Deissmann's attempt. But this should challenge us to find new ways to classify and compare letters to other types of literature, for nothing exists in isolation. All writers and thinkers are bricoleurs to varying extents, and Deissmann's attempt to delineate a narrow, specific field of epistles to explain

Paul's letters seems to not only ignore this methodological point but exclude a host of other potential comparanda, such as Epicurus' letters or Epictetus' *Discourses*, to pick but two possibilities.

Both of these scholastic strands briefly sketched above were hugely important in their time and remain widely influential today, albeit often in implicit form. But neither of these strands, I think, answers their respective questions in satisfactory fashion. As I argue below, this dissatisfaction stems from their inadequate accounting for contemporary primary sources and their theorization that provides little explanatory power for Paul and Paul's letters. In other words, I detect a shortcoming in both description and explanation.

There have been other attempts, related in various ways to the above two approaches, that have also attempted to situate Paul and his letters in his social and literary milieu. Oftentimes, scholarship has framed the debate in terms of a few specific binaries: high/low, rhetorical/*koiné*, and Jew/Greek. Broader simplification can be useful, as all theory in the end seeks some sort of reduction. But these particular binary reductions are unhelpful because of their essentialized categories and are also not justified through a careful analysis of the data. The field of Pauline studies has started to turn on these very points, as an increasing number of scholars seek ways of describing Paul and Paul's letters outside of these overly-simplified categories. I suspect few scholars today would disagree that these three binaries in particular do inadequate explanatory work for Paul's letters and merit both challenge and re-thinking.

Interestingly, in my readings of other Greco-Roman literature contemporary to Paul I came across similar problems of both essentialized categories and over-simplified binaries within classical studies. In particular, modern surveys of the primary sources often re-inscribe a high/low distinction in their attempts to describe the literary landscape. In extreme forms this would manifest in dualities such as 'Hellenic versus non-Hellenic' or 'literary versus non-literary', and typically these categories would be neither explained nor justified. Discussions of style frequently turned on whether or not particular texts or authors adhered to classicizing conventions, such as Attic words and phrases. Also present were discussions of style based on grammatical categories such as the use of hiatus, tenses, and clause-length. Though both types of stylistic analysis (classicizing; grammatical) can be useful, they speak to only a narrowly delineated field of an author's literary choices and thus do little to describe the overall style of an author's texts.

In tandem with this problem I often found a large number of ancient texts and authors whom modern scholars have had difficulty situating within their wider literary framework. This problem was not exclusive to surveys, which should be given some latitude for their necessarily broad strokes,

but manifested also in the most modern introductions to specific texts and authors. Certain texts in particular appeared to belong neither to the dominant aristocratic-rhetorical tradition nor to a sort of simplified, information-relaying vernacular. This aporia resulted in scholars classifying these authors in a host of often bizarre fashions, as unexplained adjectives such as ‘interesting’, ‘terse’, or ‘expansive’ were reductively employed as wholesale descriptors of particular texts or authors’ styles. My readings of older scholarship reflected this same confusion, as scholars could not agree on subjective judgments of particular texts or authors.

In the end, I realized that the problem was simple: there was no transparent, empirically-testable standard by which texts were classified. Not that there needs to be *the* standard, of course, but that there wasn’t even *a* standard. Criteria for classification or comparison were often nebulous, and analysis of literature often turned on relative adherence to certain stylistic devices present in ancient rhetorical handbooks: hiatus, Attic words, clause length, the use of the dual, and so forth. Texts that didn’t follow the recommendations of rhetoricians like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, were often judged as poor representations of literature, and the hierarchy of high/low noted above often became re-inscribed. Writings by authors like Philodemus and Epictetus, as well as the large body of extant scientific-technical literature, were often ignored or described as outliers.

However, some scholars didn’t fall into this trap. These scholars targeted certain ancient authors whose literary style merited mention and further consideration (e.g., Epictetus and Philodemus, among others). Indeed, there has been an increasing interest among classicists with authors and texts outside of the traditional canon. Yet scholars don’t seem to know how to classify and compare these particular authors, many of whom have a variety of similarities: a style less reflective of advanced rhetorical training; certain literary characteristics, some of which I listed above as defining Paul’s socio-literary sphere; concern with group construction and the authority of the author; and questions of morals and ethics, to name several of the most notable.

I quickly saw superficial similarities with Paul’s letters and targeted these particular texts and authors for comparison. Just as scholars in religion couldn’t satisfactorily situate Paul’s letters in their socio-literary milieu, so too did classicists have trouble with a particular set of texts and authors. Thus, after perusing the secondary scholarship on these potential comparanda, I returned to the primary sources themselves and attempted to find out how I could most accurately describe and classify these texts. The guiding questions were basic: What is fundamental to this text’s style? What are its specific, defining, or notable literary qualities? How frequently and in what context do they appear?

I proceeded through these texts multiple times, inductively attempting to answer these questions. I eventually came up with around twenty characteristics (my 'literary criteria') that seemed to define the literary stylings of these particular texts. The appearances of these characteristics were mapped out in a spreadsheet for each text that noted the amount and position of each characteristic. My spreadsheets multiplied as I went through more and more texts, and a general shape of each text began to appear.

My intuition that certain texts and authors, often those that were sites of confusion or ill judgment by modern scholars, contained a host of similarities in form and content proved largely correct. The relative densities of my literary criteria were then mapped out and compared to see in what ways certain texts were similar or different. It is not enough, in other words, to simply say that two or more texts share particular characteristics, but we must seek to describe the relations between texts in a complex, nuanced way, such as where particular characteristics occurred, with what other characteristics, and how often relative to other texts. By looking to the relative densities of shared characteristics in texts, I was able to more fully and accurately map out respective relations both within and across texts.

Previous scholarship had left me dissatisfied in the description of both Paul and certain contemporary authors. This was paralleled in what I perceived to be shortcomings in the methodologies undergirding these projects. Scholars often started from a presumption of uniqueness or an understanding of an overly formal high/low literary distinction. None of this work was able to answer fundamental questions about how we frame Paul, Paul's letters, or certain other contemporary literature within its wider ancient Mediterranean context.

My project attempts to redress these issues by providing both a new description and explanation of Paul's letters. I re-describe by detailing and applying a set of descriptive literary characteristics to Paul's letters. I re-explain by theorizing about Paul's socio-literary milieu on the basis of the application and comparison of my literary characteristics among Paul's letters, Epictetus' *Discourses*, Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*, and certain other comparanda.

In chapter one, I introduce my guiding questions, and address how scholarship has attempted to understand Paul, Paul's letters, and other Greco-Roman literature of his time. Here I pay particular attention to the difficulties scholars have had in contextualizing Paul's letters and certain other Greco-Roman literature in their wider, ancient Mediterranean socio-literary milieu. I find it telling that the same difficulties attending the attempt to understand and frame Paul's letters can also be found in the attempt to understand and frame certain types of ethical-philosophical and technical literature also written

around Paul's time. I suggest that Paul's letters and certain of these contemporary, Greco-Roman texts can be understood within their own socio-literary sphere, an understanding that explains why previous attempts to liken them to other types of literature has been unsatisfactory as well as opens the door to further detail and compare these types vis-à-vis one another. To do so, I explicitly lay out my specific literary criteria that I argue best describes texts within this particular socio-literary sphere and which allow for transparent, empirical comparison between these and other texts. An application of these criteria reveals that the texts closest to Paul's letters are Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Death* and *On Piety*. These findings stand in stark contrast to most descriptions of Paul and his letters, which calls into question both the dominant understandings of Paul's letters and suggests that a literary criteria-based approach as I pursue here has potential for wider utility in the comparison and contextualization of ancient texts.

In chapter two, I provide relevant background information about Paul, Epictetus, Philodemus, and their specific textual comparanda, suggesting that we find similarities not only in the form, content, and social purpose of their texts, but also in certain elements of the social location of the authors themselves. I begin with an overview of Epictetus' and Philodemus' lives and social contexts before moving onto Paul, touching on different modern understandings of who Paul was, or at least could have been. A summary analysis of the source-material for Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus allows for the distillation of a few discernable forms of social activity: group construction, ethical formation around exemplars, and abstract religious/cosmological teachings. I also briefly touch on the texts penned by Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus, likewise summarizing what we know about them and their style, different modern understandings, and identifying common rhetorical features: metaphors, questions, argument, religious claims, hyperbole, pathos, dialogism, use of examples, and the recourse to religious authorities.

I then contextualize Paul and his letters in his wider, ancient Mediterranean context through the lens of social location (or 'status'). I introduce how we can conceive of social location in the ancient Mediterranean and describe its features: types of people and identity, geography, economy, and different sorts of social practice common across ethnic-cultural groups (associations, families, cultic activity, etc.). I also introduce different sorts of literary activity, briefly describing possible distinctions (e.g., formal vs. informal, bureaucratic vs. pedagogical, etc.). I slot Paul into the closest analogues for his social activity and literary production, finding that the nearest candidates are the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, and his work the *Discourses*, and the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus, and his two works *On Piety* and *On Death*. I summarize what we

know of these authors, these particular works, and how my particular approach to classification and comparison with regard to Paul and Paul's letters applies to these authors and texts. I briefly review my own textual approach and refer the reader to my appendices, where I map out all the data for Paul's letters and all the different textual comparanda.

In chapter three, I focus on the methodology of my textual description and comparison, specifically the justification for using a set of textual criteria in order to describe my data and theorize different socio-literary spheres. I turn to theory from literary studies, specifically work that forwards a concept of literary taxonomies as flexible, dynamic categories based on polythetic criteria that are useful for both describing texts and explaining their relation to other texts. I then discuss theory from literary and media studies that argues for the fundamental intersection of form, content, and social purpose that is central to my definition and understanding of socio-literary spheres. I close the chapter by looking to work from linguistic anthropology that theorizes ways of thinking about the relation of texts and social purpose, and I apply this theorization to the social practices and goals of Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus.

In chapter four, I discuss my literary characteristics that I argue define Paul's socio-literary sphere in more detail, defining each characteristic, providing more extensive annotation, and discussing methodological issues inherent to their derivation and application. I then examine the overall shape of this particular socio-literary sphere according to these characteristics, discussing the relative frequencies of these characteristics in the texts penned by Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus. As control documents, I then include a few other examples of kinds of texts that my analysis shows are poor Pauline comparanda despite some scholars arguing to the contrary (advanced-rhetorical: Aelius Aristides' *Panathenaicus*; Jewish-apocalyptic: the *Damascus Document*) and a few other texts that my analysis shows have a form notably similar to texts in Paul's sphere (Seneca's *Natural Questions*; the *Letter to the Hebrews*; *4 Maccabees*). Throughout, the reader is encouraged to refer to my appendices to view my data charted both numerically and graphically. Notable aspects of the data are briefly discussed and additionally highlighted there.

In this fourth chapter, I also provide more specific analysis of Paul's letters, Epictetus' *Discourses*, and Philodemus' *On Death* and *On Piety* according to each of my literary characteristics. For each characteristic, I provide a list of general trends describing how each appears in the texts and the particular clusterings of characteristics alongside one another. I then provide reference to representative passages from Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus to show how these texts manifest the general trends, how each characteristic practically functions therein, and to illustrate how I understand each characteristic in

context. A fuller discussion of the data—including lengthy quotes and specific textual exegesis—has not been included for reasons of space. This discussion can be found online in my professional profile: PaulRobertson.weebly.com.

Chapter four may be less useful to those not interested in specific textual issues, and readers without the time or inclination may well decide to skip it. This does not imply, however, that that this chapter is any less important. Rather, this type of minutiae-focused approach is absolutely necessary in order to make broader conclusions about the form of Paul's letters, their similarity to certain other texts, and wider comments about similarities in content, social purpose, and social location that I argue are fundamentally tied to literary form.

In chapter five, I discuss the social and historical implications of my textual findings. In this chapter, I draw together my previous critiques regarding the ancient Mediterranean, socio-literary landscape from chapters one and two, the theorization on literary description and comparison in chapter three, and the application and comparison of my textual criteria in chapter four. I discuss what the similarities between Paul's letters, Epictetus' *Discourses*, and Philodemus' *On Death* and *On Piety* suggest for our historical reconstructions of things like Paul's likely education, his social purpose, and his social activity. This chapter, in other words, attempts to map our texts onto the social realities and practices of authors like Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus.

My remarks in chapter five also engage a couple other tangled theoretical issues in the study of Paul and the ancient Mediterranean more broadly: the relation between letter-writing and education, and how to understand ancient literacy and education. Scholars have had difficulty in attempting to tease out the complex relations between letter-writing, education, and literacy, issues also related to social location. My project thus situates Paul and his letter-writing practices in his broader ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman context of wide and variable educational practices and text-production in an attempt to help solve some of these issues.

I close the study with a conclusion discussing what my findings, both textual and social, suggest about the wider social and literary landscape of the ancient Mediterranean during Paul's time. These suggestions have wider implications for our study and understanding of the New Testament, early Christianity, and biblical studies more broadly. With regard to the social world, my findings highlight the tangled overlap of ethnic and social affiliations, concluding that the particular categories we use to delineate, say, a Greek philosopher from a Jewish religious leader from a Roman *collegium* participant can often have only marginal utility in understanding the social and literary landscape. Indeed, it seems that a host of types of social practice have deep, structural similarities

that suggest a commonality of society and living across ethnic, geographical, and social boundaries in the ancient Mediterranean. With regard to the literary world, my findings suggest that texts like Paul's letters, and later texts such as the Gospels and the deuterio-Pauline literature, were not authored within the narrow purview of early Christianity, but rather that this type of authorship, and early Christian socio-literary practice more broadly, were fully integrated with and stemmed from a wider, shared context. The deuterio-Pauline literature, for example, should not be simply described as stemming from those belonging to a 'Pauline school,' as it is commonly described and understood, but rather from authors whose social and literary practices were fundamentally part and parcel of their pan-Mediterranean milieu.

While my project is about Paul and Paul's letters, it is just as much about a certain sphere of Greco-Roman literature. One of my fundamental arguments is that Paul's letters can and should be usefully compared to other contemporary texts on the basis of shared literary characteristics. Closely related to this point on comparison are my theoretical remarks, which argue that there is a particular socio-literary sphere that has not been previously recognized. I hope to advance the study of Paul by advancing the study of literature around his time. The interrelation between the specific (how to describe Paul's letters) and the general (how to classify Greco-Roman literature in Paul's time) is a fundamental one. We cannot advance broader, theoretical issues without a proper understanding of specific, textual issues. Thus my project lays new groundwork in the form of a re-description (of Paul's letters and certain contemporary texts) that allows for a new edifice in the form of a theoretical explanation (of a new socio-literary sphere of Greco-Roman literature).

As a final note, due to the huge amount of data collected and analyzed, I have moved large portions of this data and its descriptive analysis online to my professional profile: PaulRobertson.weebly.com. Most of the summarized data and graphs in this monograph can be found there, but also the complete lists of data for the main texts analyzed here (works by Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus) as well as others not given substantial treatment (e.g., other works by Philodemus, Dio Chrysostom, Pliny the Younger, and Seneca). My site contains full quotes for all primary-source passages that serve as representative examples for the presence of various literary criteria, and specific descriptive analysis of these primary-source passages explaining the labeling of these criteria, how they function in the text, and where they combine with other criteria in particular, notable constellations of form, content, and purpose. It is my hope that by posting this information others can improve upon my data collection and/or my treatment of this data in both statistical analysis and graphical visualization.

Paul, Paul's Letters, and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature of the Ancient Mediterranean

Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce my approach and explain where it stands with respect to other scholarship that attempts to characterize Paul as author, Paul's letters, and contemporary Greco-Roman literature in their ancient Mediterranean context.¹ I argue that most scholarship on Paul and his letters neither adequately describes nor explains the form of Paul's writings or Paul's social location. Similarly, and I think related, most scholarship attempting to describe and explain the broader landscape of Greco-Roman literature preceding and contemporary to Paul fails to sufficiently recognize and account for the tremendous variations in style and content amongst extant texts. I suggest that we need to re-think both the texts that we are using for comparison with Paul's letters and the method we use to describe and compare literature.

Scholarship on Paul's letters and ancient Greco-Roman literature tends to have one of two related methodological shortcomings, or both. The first is a dichotomizing view of texts, describing them as either literarily sophisticated and thus worthy of study, or as lacking literary sophistication and thus to be ignored in a study of the general literary landscape. The second shortcoming

1 Many social practices (doings and sayings), literary and not, in the ancient Mediterranean were shared by peoples and regions that some scholars also describe as 'the Near East' or 'West Asia.' Aware of the fraught methodological territory here, I will simply say that I believe the 'ancient Mediterranean' to have some geographical penetration into the Near East/West Asia stemming from prior and ongoing military action, trade, and migration, with various and complex gradations of overlap between the two regions in a host of areas, including politics, language, social organization, religion, and literary practices. A good example of a work that treats complex geographical and cultural intersections in the ancient Mediterranean is K. Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003). Meanwhile, I define "Greco-Roman literature" as texts that were written in Greek within the purview of the Roman Empire's geographic/military as well as cultural influence. Such boundaries are admittedly fluid and imprecise, especially around the edges of the empire, a point which only further highlights the danger of using strictly-demarcated categories of ethnicity and culture.

describes texts in essentialist categories, such as the traditional division between 'Hellenistic' and 'Jewish'. Such categories are unhelpfully reductive, typically go unexplained and unjustified in biblical studies, and are increasingly falling out of favor though they continue to persist in certain biblical commentaries.² I redress these two shortcomings by deploying a method of comparison that cuts across essentialist categories while providing a complex, nuanced account of literature that moves beyond the question of what constitutes literary worth.

Most salient for the study of Paul, even those who are aware of the problems of essentialized categories continue to re-deploy and re-inscribe them by attributing particular, uniform world-views to groups such as Jews and Greco-Romans. To begin my discussion, a good recent example is the excellent scholar E.P. Sanders.³ Sanders prefaces his work with the insight that it has "always been a major question of whether to read his letters primarily in the context of Greco-Roman culture or that of Judaism. But there is no single entity called Greco-Roman culture. It was diverse. Judaism was also diverse."⁴ But he then goes on to make comments that reify Judaism and Hellenism as distinct entities with particular world-views that can be compared: "What we do not know at the outset is *how deeply* he was embedded in each culture";⁵ *2 Corinthians* 4:18 "is highly Greek [here seemingly meaning derived from Platonism]. It was not the view of many ancient Jews (Philo is an important exception)";⁶ "Jews and Greeks had quite different views of history";⁷ and "despite some "Greek"

2 A representative example of a traditional biblical scholar speaking about Paul: "there is hardly a line in his writings which a non-Jewish author of his day would have written," in W.H. Simcox, *The Writers of the New Testament: Their Style and Characteristics* (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1980 [1890]) 27. This older view persists in many Pauline commentaries, a point to which I will return in this chapter. Yet work comparing certain of Paul's language, concepts, and stylistic elements to Greco-Roman philosophy, for example, has clearly shown some extremely close similarities, e.g.: A. Malherbe, "'Gentle as a Nurse': The Cynic Background to I Thess ii," *NovT* 12.2 (1970) 203–217; E. Wasserman, *The Death of the Soul in Romans 7* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); T. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000).

3 E.P. Sanders, "Paul between Judaism and Hellenism," in *St. Paul among the Philosophers* (ed. J.D. Caputo and L.M. Alcoff; Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009) 74–90.

4 *Idem*, 74.

5 *Idem*, 76.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Idem*, 82.

phrases and agreement with Greco-Roman thought on human equality, the main line of his view of history and its outcome was Jewish.”⁸

In my view, the attempt to describe and understand what Jews versus Greco-Romans thought about things like ontology, history, and equality only re-inscribes these problematic categories. Instead, we should look to types of practices and texts that cut across these categories in order to make conclusions about texts and social activity in the ancient Mediterranean more broadly. Inherent in my approach is the understanding that people like Paul and Philo were not exceptions or piecemeal amalgams of different, distinct cultures, but rather were sites of complex intersections of a host of understandings and practices that existed in different degrees in a variety of people in the wider socio-historical context of the ancient Mediterranean. Sanders’ assertion that Paul must not have been exposed to much Greek literature because he doesn’t cite any doesn’t seem to hold up, for example, when we look into the broader Greco-Roman literary context and find other types of literature (e.g., technical-scientific writings; ethical-philosophical texts) that rarely cite texts from Homer and tragedy. If we want to move beyond these problematic categories of ‘Jew’ and ‘Greek’, in other words, we need to stop using them and stop describing them based on criteria like world-views.⁹

Though I will also justify and further explain my approach from the perspective of literary studies in chapter three, I here introduce my own approach to ground the rest of the study and to draw in sharper detail the contrast with most scholarship regarding Paul’s letters and contemporary Greco-Roman literature. In this outline, I will also detail the specific literary characteristics I deploy to describe and compare Paul’s letters and other related texts in ways that cut across problematic categories such as ‘Jew’, ‘Greek’, and ‘literary vs. non-literary’. My approach maintains that the body of extant Greco-Roman literature roughly contemporary to Paul bears clear witness to the fact that there was a huge variety of types of literature and styles in the ancient Mediterranean. These different types of literature corresponded to different types of content and compositional contexts, and both ancient and modern literary theory argues for the fundamental interrelation between the form, content, and social purpose of a given text, a point that I will further expand and explain in chapter three, and a point which is central to my entire project.

By seeking literary typologies that cut across essentialized categories, we can analyze literature in a way that avoids implied valuations (e.g., ‘literary’, ‘high’)

8 Idem, 88.

9 For a collection of essays that addresses this topic, see T. Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

or implied qualities (e.g., what defines 'Hellenistic' or 'Jewish' literature, such as a reified world-view). Central to my argument is that certain expectations of literary style were fundamentally tied to corresponding types of content and social purpose, and that these particular constellations of style,¹⁰ content,¹¹ and social purpose¹² existed across the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean. These particular relations specifically cut across essentialized categories such as ethnicity and religious affiliation that often played only a small or negligible role in the literary form of a given text. Opportunities for education and basic literacy seem to have been widely present across the ancient Mediterranean, and those who were sufficiently literate to compose a complex document were usually linked in loose literary networks.¹³

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- 10 Style, content, and social purpose defy easy explanation, and though I provide examples and fuller expansion and justification of my understandings throughout the study, a brief definition of each is necessary to ground my argument moving forward. Style comprises all the choices an author makes, from word choice to grammar to organization to particular literary tropes. Most scholars comparing style tend to focus on syntactic-grammatical elements such as the use of the dual or optative, or the presence of hiatus; my own use of style is broader, focusing on how particular ideas are developed with particular literary tropes, such as metaphors, logic, or rhetorical questions. Style, in other words, is a more general concept—every author and text tends to have a particular style—but it is also fundamentally related to, and derived from, specific elements of style, such as the use of metaphor or rambling sentences, all the way down to the micro-stylistic choices an author makes, such as punctuation, word order, tense, mood, and so on.
- 11 Content refers to the ideas occurring within a text. My use of the word 'content' refers not only to the actual words within the physical text, but rather to the concepts, understandings, and ideas presented, in other words those that have meaning for the author and presumably the audience. Like style, we can speak both of broader content, such as 'a text about ethics', as well as specific content, such as 'in this line the author makes a statement about what constitutes virtue.'
- 12 Social purpose refers to the goal or goals of the text. Again, it can be broad and abstract, such as to bolster the author's authority vis-à-vis his audience in the realm of ethics, an understanding which is also related to very specific social purposes, such as to convince the audience about the veracity of a particular story or statement within the text. In the present project, I use social purpose to refer to a hoped-for outcome in the author's social world, typically related to their non-textual social goals, such as gaining a following or persuading people about certain ideas. Texts, after all, are concrete artifacts, and their production, dissemination, and reading/hearing are all themselves social practices with practical consequences.
- 13 The vagary inherent in the word "loose" is intentional, used here to denote the tremendous complexity in kinds of literary networks, ranging from a close circle of literary confidants to the general diffusion of texts through trade networks. See, e.g., the discussion in W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) 222f.;

In other words, very few in the ancient Mediterranean had sufficient means and education to compose a text of the sophistication and length that we find in something like Paul's letters, and this narrow group of people and their literary compositions interacted directly or indirectly through loose literary networks comprising such activities as dinner parties, literary salons, correspondences, bookselling, public orations, and literary patronage such as seems to have occurred at the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum that preserved many texts of Philodemus.¹⁴ The search for a wide variety of specific types of literature that correspond to particular intersections of content and social purpose, as well as the social location of their authors,¹⁵ better reflects the complex connections between things like education, social purpose, literary style, type of

S.E. Porter and A.W. Pitts, "Paul's Bible, His Education and His Access to the Scriptures of Israel," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 5 (2008) 9–41, conclude that "[t]he evidence suggests that there was a book culture that cut across all of the various cultural and ethnic groups of the first century," 31; R.J. Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," *CQ* 37.1 (1987) 213–223; E.J. Kenney, "Books and Readers in the Roman World," in *Latin Literature* (ed. E.J. Kenney; 2 vols. CHCL; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 2:3–32; T. Kleberg, *Buchhandel und Verlagswesen in der Antike* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967); W.A. Johnson and H.N. Parker, eds., *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and the essays in J.H. Humphrey, ed., *Literacy in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1991). Though such works tend to focus primarily on Greek and Latin evidence, the tentative consensus sees parallels in Egypt and the Near East, although our evidence for these regions is comparatively thin. For a discussion and assemblage of the data in the Roman West, specifically Spain, see L.A. Curchin, "Literacy in the Roman Provinces: Qualitative and Quantitative Data from Central Spain," *The American Journal of Philology* 116.3 (Autumn 1995) 461–476. For a discussion of the Roman East, see R.S. Bagnall, *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2011); for useful bibliography and history of the phenomenon in the Near East, see J.N. Whisenant, "Writing, Literacy, and Textual Transmission: The Production of Literary Documents in Iron Age Judah and the Composition of the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Michigan, 2008). For a discussion of the complex, intersecting strands of geography, travel, trade, militarism, and culture in the Near East, see Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East*, noted just above.

14 See further discussion in my final chapter, where I discuss education, literacy, and literary networks of textual production and dissemination to expand my argument that Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus participated in the same, wider Greco-Roman text-producing milieu.

15 I will return to define and explain the concept of "social location" and its intersection with literary form, content, and social purpose in my final chapter; suffice to say here it is a complex phenomenon comprising such factors as age, sex/gender, wealth, occupation, ethnicity, social circle, and so on.

content, and compositional context that show similarities across the ancient Mediterranean around Paul's time.

My Approach: Textual Characteristics, Comparanda, and Socio-Literary Spheres

My project describes and explains different literary types in two ways. First, in chapter three, I provide a methodological argument for describing and comparing literature according to a set of transparent, testable, polythetic literary criteria. This justification draws from the fields of literary and media studies, showing that while strict genre categories do little effective work—indeed they share deficiencies with the essentialized categories I touched on above—we can make productive use of certain ways of classifying literature according to a set of generally shared criteria advocated by some genre theorists. An annotated description of these criteria and an explanation of their derivation and application are given fuller treatment in chapters three and four, and the following list is replicated throughout my appendices where I map out the shape of a host of texts according to these criteria: universal claims or assertions such as about the gods, appeals to authority (e.g., nature, the gods, specific texts or people), conversation, *prosópopoiia*/*éthopoiia* (approximately 'speech in character'), rhetorical questions, metaphors or analogies, anecdotes or examples, imperatives, exhortation, caustic injunctions, pathos, irony or satire, hyperbole, oppositions or choices, figurations of groupness, second person addresses ('you', usually plural) versus plural inclusive addresses ('we', 'us'), first person reflection ('me', 'I'), analysis of questions or objections, and systematic argument.

Second, in chapter four, I analyze Paul's letters according to these criteria to show where and to what extent these criteria describe each individual letter. I then apply these same criteria to certain ethical-philosophical works by Epictetus (the *Discourses*) and Philodemus (*On Death* and *On Piety*) that I find mostly closely match Paul's letters in form (literary style), content (rendered in the abstract, such as about proper living or the nature of the cosmos), and social purpose (e.g., group construction and ethical instruction) in order to show that they are better comparanda for Paul's letters as compared to traditional comparanda such as advanced rhetorical treatises or so-called Jewish apocalyptic literature. My descriptions of Paul's letters based on a wide set of specific criteria map out the shape of Paul's letters and demonstrate both similarities and differences between the letters and with respect to other texts. These similarities/differences in turn allow us to forward some conclusions about Paul's education and social location.

Central to my project and how I frame Paul, Paul's letters, and what I find to be the closest textual comparanda, is the delineation of what I term 'socio-literary spheres'. A socio-literary sphere is a grouping of texts that share significant elements of style, content, and social purpose, and whose authors usually share significant elements of education, social location, and social practice. Socio-literary spheres are semi-autonomous fields of literate, cultural production that develop their own standards and modes of discourse,¹⁶ usually implicitly, which are (often subconsciously) picked up and re-inscribed by authors who deploy these discourse conventions due to the implicit but fundamental tie between literary content, form, and social purpose.¹⁷ The boundaries of these spheres are fuzzy, and there can be a host of sub-spheres, overlaps between spheres, and innovative hybridizations of these spheres, all facts to be expected in a wide classificatory enterprise and given the huge complexities and overlaps inherent in any set of texts and authorial social positions.

A few examples of types of spheres will help illustrate this definition, and provisionally flesh out my taxonomy. One sphere in the ancient Mediterranean is comprised of those texts written by aristocratic, highly-trained orators meant for public declamation and consumption, whose style follows conventions detailed in advanced rhetorical handbooks, whose content has a large amount of Greek mythological and historical allusions as well as references to the author, and whose social purpose is to showcase the author's skill and advance their social standing.¹⁸ Treatises meant for, or derived from, declamations by

16 My language and conceptual framework here is loosely derived from Bourdieu's idea of cultural-intellectual fields: P. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). See discussion in S.K. Stowers, "Mythmaking, Social Formation, and Varieties of Social Theory," in *Redescribing Christian Origins* (ed. R. Cameron and M.P. Miller; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004) 489–496.

17 The concept of modes of discourse being re-inscribed within a given social system or society has a long lineage, broadly derived from Michel Foucault and others, and usefully expanded by recent practice theorists such as Theodore Schatzki who focus on enablements and constraints around given social practices and their organization, here including textual production, claims making, and group construction. It is important to note that these enablements and constraints are complex, shifting, and ongoing sites of mutual influence, a description that I believe similarly applies to different literary-stylistic norms within modes of textual discourse. These theorists and theoretical frameworks are discussed more extensively in chapters three and five; see in particular T.R. Schatzki, *The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), and Schatzki, *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

18 See, e.g., the description in Fronto, *On Eloquence* 2.17.

Dio Chrysostom or Aelius Aristides, two aristocratic orators with advanced rhetorical training, are prime examples of this sphere. When scholars refer to 'classical orators' or even just 'orators', they are typically referring to texts of this type, which included Latin examples such as written by Cicero and which saw a classicizing revival known as the Second Sophistic after Paul's death.¹⁹ Even in Paul's time there was a specific canon of orators who were thought by some to be the most worthy of imitation, known variously as the "Alexandrian Canon" or "Canon of Ten Orators."²⁰ Some scholars have argued that Paul's letters belong to this sphere,²¹ a conclusion that I strongly dispute and a point to which I will return.

Another sphere is comprised of the scientific-technical writing penned by authors who possessed an education pertaining to technical subjects such as engineering and mathematics. The type of content is scientific and often physically purpose-based (e.g., how to build a bridge or solve a particular math problem) with rare mention of the author, the style usually lacks many of the classicizing elements we find in the ancient rhetorical handbooks, and the social purpose is the delivery of concrete information on how to build, construct, or develop things like aqueducts and orchards. Technical treatises by the mathematician Hero of Alexandria on engineering or the physician and pharmacologist Dioscurides on medicinal materials and botany are prime examples of this sphere. Modern scholars refer to this kind of literature as *fachliteratur*, *fachsprache*, or *fachprosa* (fact/technical-literature, -speech, and

19 There is no clear consensus how to define or temporally demarcate the Second Sophistic. A useful starting point on the large subject can be found in T. Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

20 We cannot, however, be sure how far beyond the aristocratic, rhetorically-trained elite this characterization ever went. See R.M. Smith, "A New Look at the Canon of the Ten Attic Orators," *Mnemosyne* 48:1 (1995) 66–79, and I. Worthington, "The Canon of the Ten Attic Orators," in *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action* (ed. I. Worthington; London; New York: Routledge, 1994) 244–263. See also Quintilian 10.1.76, and further discussion of ancient canonization in a variety of fields beyond rhetoric in "Alexandrian Canon," in D.A. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament & Early Christian Literature & Rhetoric* (Louisville; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003) 29–30. The explicit formation of the list has been variously ascribed to ancient thinkers such as Caecilius of Kale Akte, Aristophanes of Byzantium, and Aristarchus of Samothrace. The list: Aeschines, Andocines, Antiphon, Demosthenes, Dinarchus, Hypereides, Isaeus, Isocrates, Lycurgus, and Lysias. Demosthenes continued to be reckoned a paradigm of proper, aristocratic learning and Greek composition through the Byzantine era.

21 E.g., B.W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). More examples are discussed below.

-prose, respectively), with some variation in meaning between the three.²² It is important to note that there were exceptions, such as some of Columella's agricultural writings penned in verse, showing how literary types can be blended and socio-literary spheres straddled. These problematic or ambiguous cases, however, do not necessitate an abandoning of categories.²³

Paul's letters belong to yet another socio-literary sphere, namely that of ethical-philosophical writing, shared by works such as Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Death* and *On Piety*. This sphere's content relates to ethics, group-formation, the cosmos (which incorporates understandings and discourse both about the gods and ethical/group matters given these understandings of the gods and reality more broadly, which includes society),²⁴ and

22 The subject has been recently expanding in popularity, and this list is but a sample: B. Schlieben-Lange and H. Kreuzer, "Probleme und Perspektiven der Fachsprachen- und Fachliteraturforschung: Zur Einleitung," in *Fachsprache und Fachliteratur* (ed. B. Schlieben-Lange; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983) 7–26; T. Fögen, ed., *Antike Fachtexte/Ancient Technical Texts* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005); S. Föllinger, "Fachliteratur 1: Gattungsbegriff und Gattungsgeschichte," in *Die Literatur der archaischen und klassischen Zeit* (ed. B. Zimmermann; HGLA; Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2001) 1:289–292; U. Friedrich, "Fachprosa," in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft* (ed. K. Weimar; Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997) 1:559–562; M. Horster and Ch. Reitz, eds., *Antike Fachschriftsteller: Literarischer Diskurs und sozialer Kontext* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2003); v.W.A. Krenkel, "Sprache und Fach-Sprache," in *Antike Fachschriftsteller*, 11–30; B. Meissner, *Die technologische Fachliteratur der Antike. Struktur, Überlieferung und Wirkung technischen Wissens in der Antike (ca. 400 v. Chr.–ca. 500 n. Chr.)* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999); K. Sallmann, "Fachliteratur," in *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike* (Stuttgart: J.G. Metzler Verlag, 1998) 4:386–389. I will return to the subject of *fachliteratur/fachprosa* below.

23 Within classificatory schemes on human activity (such as text-production), there will always be examples of hybridity, exaptation, and innovation more broadly. As the literary critic David Fishelov writes, such cases do not necessitate an abandoning of categories: D. Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre: The Role of Analogies in Genre Theory* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 17–18. For specific treatment of an example of this type of blending, see P. Toohey, *Epic Lessons: An Introduction to Ancient Didactic Poetry* (London: Routledge, 1996). I address this issue of categorization throughout the present study.

24 The intersection between understandings of the gods and ethical matters is fundamental, and a point of crucial intersection between Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus. For a good discussion of the relation between god(s) and ethics with respect to Epictetus, see A.A. Long, *Epictetus. A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002) esp. 153–207, an excellent book that has substantially influenced my understandings and approaches not simply to Epictetus but to the intersections of form, content, and social

the authoritative role of the author. The style is a largely unadorned prose,²⁵ with occasional uses of other conceptual and literary tropes, such as from epistolography, advanced rhetoric, and philosophy. The social purpose is to change the behavior of, and construct social groups among, the addressees, as well as to frame these issues in terms of abstract understandings of the gods, cosmos, and society that are linked to the author's authoritative knowledge and ethical exemplarity.²⁶

There are other socio-literary spheres we can identify in the ancient Mediterranean around and before Paul's time that flesh out a fuller taxonomy, such as abstract or technical philosophy (e.g., Aristotle's *Organon*; Zeno of Elea's and Chrysippus' works on logic that are extant only in fragments), business (accounts, contracts, lists), Rabbinic writings (legalistic discussions of ethical matters within a specifically delineated, ethnic-social-religious group), and poetry, which is designed for entertainment and to show the skill and

purpose of all three authors more broadly. The relation between god(s) and ethics, meanwhile, is a large subject in Pauline studies, and though a similar work to Long's does not yet exist for Philodemus I suspect one will not be long in coming. My textual analyses in chapter four make especially clear the importance of the link between the gods, ethics, and the personal exemplarity of the author in question, a link that is central to the specific texts of Paul's letters, Epictetus' *Discourses*, and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*.

25 'Adornment' is a potentially tricky word and concept, which I use here to mean the rhetorical elements, Atticizing vocabulary and grammar, and classical references (e.g., Homer, Euripides) that define the aristocratic, classicizing-rhetorical sphere. This 'lack of adornment' is not to imply a lack of ability, though there may very well have been such a lack, but rather to highlight the stylistic choices that authors made based on a text's compositional context, content, and social purpose.

26 Note parallels between my account here and the summary of conceptual, literary, and social-purpose parallels found in J.C. Thom, "Paul and Popular Philosophy", in *Paul's Graeco-Roman Context* (ed. C. Breytenbach; Peeters: Leuven, 2015) 47–74. Thom argues that "[m]ost of the similarities between New Testament texts and Hellenistic-Roman philosophies in terms of conceptualization, style, form, and psychagogical practices may thus be explained by popular philosophy forming part of the general cultural repertoire," 58. He discusses the work of both Sterling and Runia: G.E. Sterling, "Hellenistic Philosophy and the New Testament", in *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament* (ed. S.E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 313–358; D.T. Runia, "Ancient Philosophy and the New Testament: 'Exemplar' as Example", in *Method and Meaning: Essays on New Testament Interpretation in Honor of Harold W. Attridge* (ed. A.B. McGowan and K.H. Richards; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2011) 347–361. Note the list Thom highlights, from Sterling: modes of discourse (diatribe; paraenesis; protrepsis), literary forms (paraenetic letters; lists of virtues/vices; hardship lists; haustafeln), topoi.

erudition of the poet, and which as a sphere can be further sub-divided according to fundamental differences in content and style (e.g., epic, lyric, tragic, comic, etc.). It is important to remember that each of these spheres have as central to their definition a given social purpose, a quality that differentiates socio-literary spheres from literary genres.²⁷ Nonetheless, there are bound to be overlaps between spheres and literary genres, overlaps between spheres, and identifiable sub-types, some of which will be more alike than others, and all of which we might think of within the single broad sphere of ancient Mediterranean textual production. This sphere, in turn, is but part of the even broader sphere of ancient Mediterranean social practice.²⁸ Any comparison between texts or social positions is a complex one, and differences are also to be expected even among very similar texts and authors. Yet we can still make positive conclusions based on the significance of the similarities relative to the smallness of the differences as well as the relative similarities/differences of the texts and authors within a given sphere relative to the similarities/differences with respect to those outside this sphere.

This language of 'spheres' reflects one of the central arguments of the present study, namely that we should not speak of different levels of literature (high versus low) or even the literary quality of a particular text (literary versus

27 E.g., biography (fictional or not, including Greek *bioi*, Latin *vitae*, and the gospels; see discussion by Konstan and Walsh, BurrIDGE, A.Y. Collins, and Schmeller (2009) on gospels as biography) and history (e.g., Josephus' *Jewish War*; Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica*; Appian's *Historia Romana*). Telling stories of people or countries is not the same as, for example, constructing groups around particular understandings of the gods (Paul's sphere), jockeying for position in the competitive speaking arena of the social elite (advanced rhetorical sphere), building a bridge (scientific-technical sphere), deciding on the nature of a particular abstract subject (technical philosophy), keeping the financial books (business sphere), or entertaining (poetry sphere). As I've mentioned, however, all text-production comprises the broader sphere of ancient Mediterranean textual production, which in turn has its own implicit goals, such as advancing erudition or personal status through the production of learned documents. Some readers might argue that certain of these genres should be considered socio-literary spheres, and vice versa, and I am open to any correctives that can identify a particular, consistent intersection of form, content, and social purpose.

28 The influential literary critic and philosopher Tzvetan Todorov sees a series of theoretical genres, moving from the more basic to the more complex. Indeed, certain similarities between the different types identified here suggest that my literary spheres are sub-types extracted from broader socio-literary theoretical groupings. See T. Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975) 15. Extensive further discussion of genre and socio-literary groupings follows in chapter three.

non-literary), as both of these formulations imply a relative valuation. Rather, we should speak in the language of types, spheres, circles, etc., that reflect a text's and author's position that is shared with other similar texts and authors, and that reflects the intentionality of writing certain types of content in particular ways instead of implying a deficiency or lack of ability to write in a different register, even where we suspect this lack of ability exists. By using the language of socio-literary spheres we can usefully demarcate similar types of textual production, a grouping that entails both the nature of such texts (content, style, social purpose) and the social position of the author(s) (education, social standing, personal history, defining social practices, etc.).

We must also keep in mind that the delineation of textual types and the social positions of their authors is a task that demarcates boundaries around an extremely small section of ancient society, for perhaps as little as 2% of all people in the ancient Mediterranean were able to proficiently pen a text of some length and complexity.²⁹ These different socio-literary spheres, in other words, roughly correlate with sub-types of the broader sphere of text-producers in the ancient Mediterranean. This type of text-producing person had a certain minimum amount of education, was often tied to some amount of wealth, and likely had a certain amount of social capital due to their education and socio-economic standing that frequently also overlapped with civic office-holding. Socio-literary spheres are semi-autonomous fields of literate, cultural production, and my project is thus partly an attempt to describe literate, cultural production itself within the wider ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman context. We must remember, however, that the semi-autonomous nature of the field entails that there is not a one-to-one correlation between social level and literary attainment, a point that I expand in my final chapter.

Though this study focuses on only one, specific socio-literary sphere (the ethical-philosophical sphere containing Paul's letters), I do think that we can theorize more broadly about ancient Greco-Roman literature as a whole, as

29 I am here following the excellent article K. Hopkins, "Christian Number and Its Implications," *J ECS* 6.2 (1998) 185–226. Opinions on this subject vary widely, and are also contingent on geographic considerations such as region or urban versus rural. Harris, for example, argues that "[t]he likely overall illiteracy level of the Roman Empire under the principate is almost certain to have been above 90%," and always at least above 50% even for educated areas, especially if including women and 'country people,' in W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 22. Much also hinges on how one defines literacy, of course, with Hopkins' suggestion of 2% referring to those whose level of literacy could sufficiently facilitate a text as lengthy and complex as Paul's letters. I return to the subjects of literacy and education in chapter five with more extensive discussion and methodological remarks.

textual production was a particular social practice of those possessing a certain level of education and was closely related to social context (which in turn includes things like status, sex/gender, religion, ethnicity, group construction, and so forth). However, such an attempt at broader theorization can only come after, and rest upon, work like my own here that attempts to describe and explain specific sub-types. Broader taxonomies arise by generalizing with regard to detailed specifics, and it is thus my hope that my project contributes to an understanding of specific stylistic elements of certain texts by Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus as well as an understanding of the broader contours of ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman literature.³⁰

A few qualifications are in order about using the language of socio-literary spheres to describe, explain, categorize, and compare Paul and his letters with other authors and texts. Most importantly, I am not denying the useful work of many other scholars who have persuasively detailed other ways of thinking about Paul and explained elements of Pauline thought through other lenses. Indeed, there are many ways that Paul attempts to claim authority (i.e., garner social capital) and position himself within his socio-literary context. A few examples, some of which I will return to, include: Jewishness/Judaeaness³¹ (e.g., Paul's claims to being a Judean at *Romans* 11:1),³² use of Scripture

30 Todorov usefully describes the relationship between the individual text and the broader, theorized text-type thusly: "every literary study must participate in a double movement: from the particular work to literature generally (or genre), and from literature generally (from genre) to the particular work. To grant a temporary privilege to one direction or the other—to difference or to resemblance—is a perfectly legitimate transaction. Further, it is of the very nature of language to move within abstraction and within the 'generic,'" in Todorov, *The Fantastic*, 7.

31 I am tentatively persuaded by the argument that we should use the term 'Judaean' instead of 'Jew', but it is irrelevant to my points here or my broader argument. See discussion in S. Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007) 457–512. For recent discussion of the different positions in this debate, see D.M. Miller, "The Meaning of *Ioudaios* and its Relationship to Other Group Labels in Ancient 'Judaism,'" *Currents in Biblical Research* 9.1 (2010) 98–126, and Miller, "Ethnicity Comes of Age: An Overview of Twentieth-Century Terms for *Ioudaios*," *Currents in Biblical Research* 10.2 (2012) 292–311.

32 We might usefully compare constructions of 'Greekness' that appear in Greco-Roman literature before and after Paul's time, which was surely implied and reinforced in the citations of Greek mythological heroes like Odysseus or historical figures like Socrates. The construction and negotiation of Greek identity has been a particular focus of recent scholarship on the Second Sophistic, such as pertaining to figures like Lucian of Samosata. Both so-called Greekness and Jewishness can vary greatly based on time, circumstance, and the claimant, but seems to generally invoke a specific heritage of literature, learning, particular personal and social attributes such as piety, and geography that can also invoke

(frequent quotations of the Septuagint),³³ philosophy (Paul shares both language³⁴ and conceptual framework³⁵ with certain Hellenistic philosophical schools), medical writings (specifically the discussion of *pneuma*),³⁶ divination (Paul's appeals to 'signs and wonders and mighty works' in 2 *Corinthians* 12:12),³⁷ and as literate, religious specialist (as producer of texts within a Bourdieuan framework of generating authority in specialized fields).³⁸ It is a significant challenge to bring together these multiple elements in a coherent way. It is my hope that the language of socio-literary spheres can help to paint a nuanced picture of Paul and his writings that speaks to the many complex factors that comprise textual production and social location.

Grounding the Present Study: Literary Criteria, and Specific versus Abstract Content

The literary criteria for my new categorization and theorization take as a starting point the specific literary elements recommended by ancient rhetorical

ethnicity. It is often also closely tied to class, status, or social location (more on this in my final chapter), constructing a groupness of 'we versus them' such as seen in the origin of the word 'barbarian.'

- 33 Notably, however, Paul's use and interpretation of Scripture is nothing like the more complicated treatment seen in later Christian thinkers such as Origen, John Chrysostom, or the Cappadocian Fathers, all of whom also wrote in a much more classicizing rhetorical style than what we find in Paul's letters. Paul uses Scripture for illustrative purposes and to frame his own project as prophetic (and hence authoritative), not as part of a hugely complex and layered attempt at persuasion about a particular issue, be it a legal defense or simply his own rhetorical virtuosity. For important methodological discussion of the Septuagint and its study, see: N.F. Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); R.T. McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003); L. Greenspoon, "The Use and Abuse of the Term 'LXX' and Related Terminology in Recent Scholarship," *BIOCS* 20 (1987) 21–29.
- 34 Wasserman, *The Death of the Soul in Romans* 7.
- 35 T. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).
- 36 T.W. Martin, "Paul's Pneumatological Statements and Ancient Medical Texts," in *The New Testament and Early Christian Greco-Roman Literature in Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune* (ed. John Fotopoulos; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 105–128; P. Robertson, "De-Spiritualizing *Pneuma*: Modernity, Religion, and Anachronism in the Study of Paul," in *MTSR* 26.4/5 (2015) 365–383.
- 37 J. Eyl, "By the Power of Signs and Wonders': Paul, Divinatory Practices, and Symbolic Capital" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Brown University, 2011).
- 38 P. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

theorists such as Quintilian and Pseudo-Demetrius. However, for the most part my literary criteria are modern, second-order categories, reflecting my argument that Paul's letters and certain other contemporary writings must be understood apart from the strict guidelines of ancient, advanced rhetorical theory.³⁹ Ancient literary theorization was largely confined to highly-educated, classicizing, aristocratic rhetors participating in a specific, narrow field of social, cultural, and textual activity, and thus we must provide our own characteristics apart from this sphere to describe texts that are not the product of this same socio-literary mold.

The literary criteria that I use reflect the central features that I have identified in the texts that share a particular socio-literary sphere (Paul's letters; Epictetus' *Discourses*; Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*) and hence share certain common elements of content (group construction; ethics/morals; universal claims, such as about the gods, cosmos, and/or society; foregrounding of personal authority in parallel with other appeals to authority). By way of reminder, my criteria, also listed in my appendices and discussed further in chapters three and four, are as follows: universal claims or assertions such as about the gods; appeals to authority (e.g., nature, the gods, specific texts or people); conversation, *prosópopoiia/éthopoiia* (essentially 'speech-in-character'); rhetorical questions; metaphors or analogies; anecdotes or examples; imperatives; exhortation; caustic injunctions; pathos; irony or satire; hyperbole; oppositions or choices; figurations of groupness; second person addresses ('you') versus plural inclusive addresses ('we', 'us'); first person reflection ('me', 'I'); analysis of questions or objections; and systematic argument. These criteria reflect both modes of argument and techniques of narrative—in other words both the 'what' and the 'how' of writing. In the chapters that follow, I map out this 'what' and 'how' in different texts and then map them onto the 'why' (i.e., why they have this particular configuration of form, content, and social purpose) within the broader socio-literary landscape.

I argue that we can answer the why question for a particular text or type of text by looking to its social purpose, which entails the social context of both

39 In the words of Margaret Mitchell, when it comes to rhetorical theory, we mustn't take "their *techné* out of its setting in *paideia* to use in some cookie cutter way to dissect New Testament documents. Conceived in these terms, 'rhetorical criticism' should be viewed as less a method to be applied than a sensibility to be cultivated," 350, in M. Mitchell, "Rhetorical Handbooks in Service of Biblical Exegesis: Eustathius of Antioch takes Origen back to School," in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune* (ed. John Fotopoulos; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 349–367.

the text and its author. We must be careful to speak of the style of different texts instead of just the style of a particular author: a given author may very well be capable of writing in different styles based on changing circumstances and purpose, as we see even between Paul's different letters. Furthermore, authors within my proposed sphere have different social contexts despite some notable similarities. Paul is different in some notable ways from Epictetus and Philodemus, and this may explain some of the differences in style and content between his letters and other texts within the same sphere.

Paul, for example, frames his universal-cosmological claims not with the philosophical rationale of an Epicurean like Philodemus but rather with assertions about divine figures such as God or Christ (compare Philo, who seems to incorporate both philosophical rationale and specific assertions about religious figures). Contrary to Philodemus' Epicurean polytheism or Epictetus' more Stoic pantheism, Paul vouches for the exclusive devotion to a certain ethnic god (the Judaeian one), Jesus Christ, and particular attendant practices (e.g., baptism) while decrying the existence of all other gods and attendant social practices (e.g., as he does in *Romans* when discussing idol worship). Paul relates his claims to authority to a specific ethnic-religious tradition, to which we might see full or only partial parallels in the authority Philodemus gives to the Epicurean founder Epicurus, and that Epictetus gives to Stoic pioneers such as Chrysippus.⁴⁰ Along these same lines, Paul is claiming and offering access to divine things like the Judaeian God and the Christ-*pneuma*, while someone like Philodemus has as one of his stated goals the removal of fear of the gods. Paul has an ethnic self-presentation which seems to differ from the other figures in my comparative list above, although some ideal of 'Greekness' might provide full or partial parallel, an idea and ideal which seems to be implied and reinforced in the citations of Greek mythological heroes like Odysseus or historical figures like Socrates, who frequently plays a major role in Epicurus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*.

We thus see that while specific elements of content can change within a given sphere, the overall *type* of content understood in the abstract—a framework of religious claims containing generalized ethical prescriptions toward piety and virtue, for example, or an idealized authority figure connected to a particular ethnic-cultural ideal—remains similar, as does attendant literary style and broader social purpose. Broadly speaking, all three authors explicate and defend their cosmological framework, foreground their personal authority

40 D. Sedley, "Philosophical Allegiance in the Greco-Roman World," in *Philosophia Togata: Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society* (ed. M.T. Griffin and J. Barnes; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 97–119.

and exemplarity vis-à-vis their audience, construct groupness in opposition to others, and forward an abstract, ethical program. These specific elements of content and social purpose often overlap, such as constructing groupness around abstract, ethical-pious living, a piety which is defined in relation to an abstract notion of god or the gods, and which is claimed to be exemplified in the author's own life.

As to the reasons why this particular sphere matches its type of content with a form that lacks the elements of advanced rhetorical treatises and seems to be more easily readable and understandable, I have a few suggestions: a concern with widening the audience, many of whom may not have possessed the tools to fully comprehend or follow the stylings of advanced rhetorical theory; a concern with identifying with a general audience instead of consciously manufacturing a social or class division derived from a linguistic style as aristocratic orators seem to do; or even that practical, moral matters simply carried a social expectation of plainer-spoken delivery. This latter possibility may have been due simply to semi-arbitrary, social-literary tradition, or reflect the reality that simple, ethical advice manifests in many cultures and times in the form of basic, easily comprehensible aphorisms or advice designed to be easily remembered and applied. In the end, of course, it could well be some combination of all of the above. I will return to the fundamental relationship between social purpose and type of language in chapter three at greater length.

Yet before I continue in greater detail—about Paul and his letters, Epictetus and his *Discourses*, Philodemus and *On Piety* and *On Death*, and the application of my criteria to describe and compare these texts—it is necessary first to demonstrate that previous and current approaches pertaining to Paul's letters and Greco-Roman literature are lacking, a point that I have until now only asserted by way of introduction. This engagement with other approaches will help both to situate the problem and to highlight how and where my approach differs from most scholarship. As I mentioned above, I argue that most other approaches fail to properly characterize Paul's letters, to describe the wider literary landscape of contemporary Greco-Roman literature in the ancient Mediterranean, and to explain the complex relation between types of texts and authors that I believe is fundamental to understanding Paul, Paul's letters, and his contextual socio-literary landscape more broadly. By contrast, I have provided a specific list of particular literary-stylistic criteria for the classification and comparison of texts as well as identified specific areas of content and social purpose that I believe fundamentally intersect with these literary characteristics.

I will first engage scholarship pertaining to Paul and Paul's letters before moving on to scholarship treating the broader Greco-Roman literary landscape.

Critiques of these approaches centrally inform my thesis that we must re-think how we categorize and compare ancient literature such as Paul's letters. I conclude by pointing out some similarities in the deficiencies of approaches to Paul, Paul's letters, and the broader ancient Mediterranean Greco-Roman literary landscape, and pointing a way forward that can redress and move beyond these methodological problems. Lastly, what follows is intended only as a useful and pertinent introduction to previous scholarship on Pauline and Greco-Roman literature. Given the massive body of scholarship on these issues, I have often provided representative examples of different types of approaches instead of a complete review of the literature. Additional discussion can be found in footnotes and my bibliography, neither of which, for reasons of space, can be exhaustive.

Scholarship Characterizing Paul and Paul's Letters

Scholarship attempting to characterize the language of Paul's letters has generally fallen into one of two camps. One camp primarily consists of an earlier generation of scholars who saw in Paul's letters the language of the common people or lower classes—the '*koiné* of the people' for Paul's mission to the gentiles—and who understood Paul as writing in a simple way that reflects a predominantly oral culture and little formal education.⁴¹ Some scholars in

41 Gunkel, Overbeck, Deissmann, and Bultmann understood the Bible as originating in a generally non-literate society, with Gunkel particularly focusing his attention on the Old Testament: H. Gunkel, *The Folktale in the Old Testament* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1987 [1921]); Gunkel, *The History of Religion and the Old Testament* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1910). Overbeck, Deissmann, and Bultmann understood early Christianity as generally a non-literate phenomenon: F. Overbeck, "Über die Anfänge der patristischen Literatur," *Historische Zeitschrift* (1882) 417–472; G.A. Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten. Das Neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1923 [1908]); R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1976 [1921]), who was skeptical about any early relation between orality and text-production. Particularly Deissmann and Bultmann argued for the predominance of oral transmission vis-à-vis text-production in earliest Christianity, an understanding and argument that persists in, e.g., the work of Koester, a student of Bultmann: H. Koester, "Written Gospels or Oral Tradition?," *JBL* 113 (1994) 293–297. There is also a strand of scholarship arguing for the predominance of orality in Judaism, e.g. B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity, with Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998 [1961, 1964]), and M. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism: 200 BCE to 400 CE* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

this first camp argued that Paul's language was that of a Jewish vernacular and thus his letters were reflective of a particular Semitic or Jewish Greek.⁴² Other

This type of approach and understanding stems, I think, from the occupation with the origins and transmission of rabbinic thought as well as long-standing focus among classicists on the role of orality and memory generally in the ancient world. An influential deployment of this focus on orality in biblical studies can be found in the work of Ong, e.g. W.J. Ong, "Before Textuality: Orality and Interpretation," *Oral Tradition* 3.3 (1988) 259–269. Though the majority of this type of work has looked to the gospels, especially Mark, it has also figured in Pauline studies, as certain theological studies tied orality to the power of the Christian gospel as opposed to the written law, e.g. W. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 140–183, following Ong. Other scholars have pointed out the wide evidence for silent reading, e.g. F.D. Gilliard, "More Silent Reading in Antiquity: *Non Omne Verbum Sonabat*," *JBL* 112 (1993) 689–694, and B. Knox, "Silent Reading in Antiquity," *GRBS* 9 (1968) 421–435, resulting in a much more nuanced picture. An excellent discussion on terminology, method, and theory can be found in V.K. Robbins, "Oral, Rhetorical and Literary Cultures: A Response," *Semeia* 65 (1994) 75–90. One cannot deny the importance of orality in the ancient, Greco-Roman Mediterranean, but I do think that disproportionate weight has been given to the role of orality in the composition of the New Testament.

- 42 E.g., M. Black, *A New Century Bible* (London: InterVarsity, 1970), who sees a specifically-Jewish adaptation of Stoic diatribes, and Fergus King, "St. Paul and Culture," *Mission Studies* 14.1–2 (1997) 84–101. The search for "Hebraisms" or "Aramaisms" in Paul, and the New Testament more broadly, also reflects this understanding: D.A. Black, "New Testament Semitisms," *The Bible Translator* 39.2 (April 1988) 215–223. This understanding also exists also in the work of some classicists, who tend to understand 'Jewish Greek' on the level of syntactic interference/influence, e.g. investigating the "spoken Jewish Greek of the authors of the NT": V. Bubenik, *Hellenistic and Roman Greece as a Sociolinguistic Area* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1989) 65f. Such approaches are notoriously difficult to prove and their payoff tends to be limited to just a handful of syntactical or idiomatic elements, e.g. Bubnick, 67. For an influential account that argues for dialects of Hellenistic and Aramaic Greek, see H.B. Rosén, "Die Sprachsituation in römischen Palästina," in *Die Sprachen im römischen Reich der Kaiserzeit* (ed. G. Neumann and J. Untermann; Köln: Rheinland-Verlag 1980) 215–240. A common position of biblical grammarians is that certain New Testament writings have a "Semitic tinge": M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1963); see also F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961 [1896]), which argues for a fundamental Semitic background to the New Testament language; see further the work of M. Reiser, G.D. Kilpatrick, and K. Beyer. I agree that during Paul's time there must have been at least some types of intersections between languages and dialects such as Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic, and historical-linguistic analogies (as well as the careful linguistic and philological work of the several just cited scholars)

scholars in this camp argued that Paul's language was reflective of a common, Greek vernacular of a type evidenced in the papyri.⁴³ Both types of scholars in this camp held Paul's language (Jewish Greek; common Greek vernacular) in opposition to what they understood to be a proper, classic, Hellenistic-rhetorical style.⁴⁴ Such approaches tended to draw a rather firm line between the conceptual and literary categories of Judaism and Hellenism. Christianity, in this strand of thought, was either a new category with conceptual and literary qualities all its own, or its conceptual and literary qualities were solely derived from Judaism. Certain modern scholarship that laudably attempts to think of Paul and his language apart from the categories of Judaism/Hellenism⁴⁵

suggest the likelihood of linguistic innovations such as loan-words, syntactical/lexical influence, and mercantile pidgins. Most of this linguistic overlap and innovation, however, did not make its way into the production of lengthy and sophisticated Greek texts such as we find in Paul's letters. Paul's language, as I argue, is most accurately thought of not as a type of Jewish or vernacular Greek appearing almost solely in the New Testament, but is rather closest to certain Greco-Roman ethical-philosophical literature such as works by Epictetus and Philodemus that were meant for, and read across, the wider Mediterranean. I find particularly apt the critique of a 'Jewish Greek' by, among others, M. Mitchell, "Le style, c'est l'homme: Aesthetics and Apologetics in the Stylistic Analysis of the New Testament," *NT* 51 (2009) 369–388.

- 43 This linguistic approach and understanding was in many ways pioneered by J.H. Moulton, *Einleitung in die Sprache des N.T. Auf Grund der vom Verfasser neu bearbeiteten 3. engl. Aufl.* (A Grammar of New Testament Greek, vol. 1 [Prolegomena], 1908) (Übersetzte deutsche Ausgabe; Heidelberg, 1911). A more recent defense of Moulton can be found in N. Turner, *Syntax (als Bd. III von J.H. Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek)* (Edinburgh, 1965), and Turner, *Second Thoughts VII.—Papyrus Finds. The Expository Times LXXVI: 2*, Nov. 1964, S. 44–48. For a more socially-inclined defense of this approach, see A.D. Nock, "The Vocabulary of the New Testament," *JBL* 52 (1933) 131–139. I side with much recent scholarship that largely rejects these conclusions.
- 44 Note, for instance, the conclusions of M. Reiser, *Sprache und literarische Formen des Neuen Testaments: Eine Einführung* (UTB 2197; Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001). Reiser argues that the New Testament authors are part of a Jewish literary tradition and not therefore part of a Greek literary culture; note the summaries of Reiser's arguments and his ideological standpoint, as well as the devastating critiques of Mitchell, "Le style, c'est l'homme," both treated further below.
- 45 E.g., T. Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001). As stated succinctly by A.W. Pitts, "Hellenistic Schools in Jerusalem and Paul's Rhetorical Education," in *Paul's World* (ed. S.E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 19–50, "[o]ver the past fifty years, through the work of scholars like Lieberman and Hengel, it has become clear that a rigid dichotomy between Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism can no longer be maintained. There is plenty of evidence for a widespread knowledge of Greek among first-century Palestinians," 19, though I object to

or re-focus on Paul's Jewish context in a nuanced way⁴⁶ are in many ways reactions to this first camp.

A second camp comprises those who see in Paul's letters the language of aristocratic, advanced Greco-Roman rhetoric, and who understand Paul as writing in a highly sophisticated fashion according to the guidelines of ancient Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks. Such an approach implies that Paul himself possessed at least some advanced, formal rhetorical training. Though it has roots in some older scholarship, this latter camp has fully articulated its positions only fairly recently relative to the first camp. Included in this camp, though perhaps by way of an uncomfortable fit, also reside those scholars who have characterized parts or all of Paul's letters according to specific ancient rhetorical techniques. The most fruitful work along these lines has analyzed Paul's letters, and other ancient texts, according to the rhetorical and literary technique known as the diatribe. Although both approaches in this camp—Paul's letters as Greco-Roman oratory and/or diatribe—have been productive and useful for the field, both have limitations that I seek to move past due to my attempt to situate Paul in his wider ancient Mediterranean milieu by way of comparing entire groups of texts using transparent textual criteria.

I will begin with the first camp, namely those scholars who see in Paul and Paul's letters the common vernacular of the lower classes. I will review certain influential positions in historical scholarship and then point out the shortcomings of such approaches. I will then do the same for the second camp, namely those scholars who think Paul is best analyzed through the lens of advanced rhetorical handbooks that for some scholars includes the diatribe technique. I conclude in contradistinction to both camps, arguing that Paul's language was not atypical within his wider Greco-Roman ancient Mediterranean context, that it was similar to other types of professional prose but was not a common spoken vernacular or a highly sophisticated rhetorical register, that Paul incorporated some features from advanced rhetorical theory into his writing but that we should not think of him as a trained rhetorician, and that I agree in

his conclusions extended from this comment regarding Hellenistic schools, a point to which I will return in my final chapter. Pitts is referring specifically to M. Hengel, *The "Hellenization" of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London: Trinity, 1989); Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul* (London: Trinity Press, 1991); S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II–IV Centuries C.E.* (2nd ed.; New York: Feldheim, 1965); Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the 1 Century B.C.E.–IV Century C.E.* (New York: JTSA, 1950).

46 E.g., M.D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

many (but not all) ways with certain minority assessments that conceive of Paul as a letter writer with specialized training in that field. I then suggest ways that we can improve on such minority assessments from both a theoretical-classificatory and textual-comparative standpoint.

Paul's Letters, Koiné of the People, and a Biblical-Jewish Vernacular

Gustav Adolf Deissmann opened up the veritable scholastic floodgates on questions of biblical language with his monumentally influential *Licht vom Osten*.⁴⁷ Opposing the classicizing tendency of his academic forerunners, Deissmann had two major conclusions. First, he made a distinction between a letter and an epistle, the former of which was non-literary.⁴⁸ An epistle was a public, literary document, a 'literary art-form.'⁴⁹ Laudably acknowledging that there were literary forms that straddled both categories, he nonetheless categorized Paul's letters as 'Letters.' This position has been rightly critiqued by many subsequent scholars, drawing as it does too sharp and unnecessary a distinction between different types of letter forms.⁵⁰

Second, Deissmann extensively compared the papyri, mostly those from Egypt, with the New Testament writings, arguing that the papyri were better comparanda for understanding New Testament language than the literature typically used from the Classical and Hellenistic eras, such as rhetorical or philosophical works. Though the integration of these materials was an important step for scholarship, Deissmann failed to sufficiently account for the huge internal variance amongst the papyri,⁵¹ their non-representative character,

47 G.A. Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten* (4th ed.; Tübingen, 1923 [1908]).

48 Idem, 118: "[Letters] geschaffen nicht von der Kunst, sondern vom Leben, bestimmt nicht für die Öffentlichkeit und die Nachwelt, sondern für den Augenblick und den Alltag."

49 Idem, 195: Epistles were a "literarische Kunstform, eine Gattung der Literatur, wie zum Beispiel Dialog, Rede, Drama."

50 See, e.g., S.K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1989) 18–20. Critiques of Deissmann, however, are not recent, appearing soon after the publication of *Licht vom Osten*, and the work has remained a touchstone for both influence and debate ever since. Like many older, influential thinkers, however, Deissmann's scholarly contributions were much wider than is typically remembered; see, e.g., A. Gerber, *Deissmann the Philologist. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche Bd. 171* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010).

51 Deissmann does deserve credit for a focus on the papyri, which continue to receive little literary attention; see discussion in G.O. Hutchinson, "Down among the Documents: Criticism and Papyrus Letters," in *Ancient Letters: Classical and Late Antique Epistolography* (ed. R. Morello and A.D. Morrison; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 17f.

and the only small amount of actual linguistic overlap between the papyri and Pauline letters.⁵² Deissmann did, however, put his finger on a problem in biblical scholarship, namely the general confusion that pertained to the exact meaning of the term *koiné*. He argued for a very broad colloquial understanding, a definition whose imprecision would come to plague later scholarship.

A prominent scholar who somewhat followed in the footsteps of Deissmann was Heikki Koskenniemi.⁵³ By similarly focusing on the papyri, Koskenniemi was able to show that Paul's letters shared many structural features, such as their openings and closings, with Greek letters, which could be much more rhetorically sophisticated than Deissmann allowed. In many ways, Koskenniemi's useful corrective opened the door for later scholarly understandings of the extensive variance in rhetorical-epistolary forms and the hesitation in positing firm linguistic categorizations,⁵⁴ though there has been success in categorizing types of letters themselves.⁵⁵

I will return to the issue of letters below, but the question of where to situate Paul's language remains. Scholars are typically unsure how to categorize Paul, and equating his language with *koiné* is unhelpful, as this latter category is overly broad and often slippery.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the relationship between texts of the New Testament (particularly with reference to Paul) and a common vernacular or linguistic register has itself been called into question: "Die Auffassung, dass die Sprache des NT ein Zeugnis der hellenistischen Umgangssprache oder sogar einer griechischen Vulgärsprache sei, kann nicht mehr aufrechterhalten werden."⁵⁷

52 Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 18–20.

53 H. Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedakatemia, 1956).

54 See useful discussion in E.R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991) 4–5, and Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 28–31.

55 Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 49–173; see more in-depth discussion of scholarship on epistolography in my final chapter.

56 L. Rydbeck, "On the Question of Linguistic Levels and the Place of the New Testament in the Contemporary Language Milieu," in *The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays* (ed. S.E. Porter; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 191.

57 T. Vegge, *Paulus und das antike Schulwesen: Schule und Bildung des Paulus* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006) 167. Vegge, responding to both Rydbeck and Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, argues that the New Testament itself shows the necessity of re-envisioning of our current understanding of the linguistic and literary landscape: "Diese Literaturkoine ist aber ihrerseits eine literarische Sprache, deren Formsystm und Syntax sich von der Umgangssprache unterschied und die darüber hinaus über einen rhetorisch elaborierten Gattungskanon verfügte," 167.

Works that attempt a close linguistic analysis of Paul vis-à-vis other vernaculars and linguistic registers are extremely rare, a telling point in and of itself. Indeed, though many grammars of the New Testament exist, these works frequently do little to situate the New Testament with regards to other contemporary Greek literature and the overall development of the language itself such as we find in a variety of broader linguistic-historical surveys,⁵⁸ though we do find the occasional exception.⁵⁹ Some older scholarship tended to see in Paul and the other New Testament writers a specific type of Septuagintal Greek heavily influenced by Semitic grammar and semantics that existed independent of a nebulously-defined Hellenistic Greek. The most recent iteration of this view, by Marius Reiser,⁶⁰ argues, for instance, that the New Testament writings reflect a non-literary type of Jewish-Hellenistic literature (“eigenwillige Formen der jüdisch-hellenistischen Literatur”) derived primarily from the Septuagint.⁶¹ Reiser's positions were rightly disproven by Margaret Mitchell,⁶² and wider claims about Semitic, Aramaic, and Septuagintal Greek independent

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- 58 A.N. Jannaris, *Historical Greek Grammar* (MacMillan, 1897); R. Browning, *Medieval and Modern Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (London; New York: Longman, 1997).
- 59 C.C. Caragounis, *The Development of Greek and the New Testament: Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, and Textual Transmission* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) esp. 95–232; see also F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar*, which has remained highly influential, but is typical in its focus on New Testament grammar vis-à-vis the Greek language as a whole. For an interesting discussion of this issue, see L. Rydbeck, “What Happened to Greek Grammar after Albert Debrunner?,” *NTS* 21 (1974/5) 424–427.
- 60 M. Reiser, *Sprache und literarische Formen des Neuen Testaments*. See also M. Reiser, “Hat Paulus Heiden bekehrt?” *BZ* 39 (1995) 76–91.
- 61 Idem, 194, describing the New Testament texts as the “Höhepunkt und das einflußreichste Erbe der jüdisch-hellenistischen Kultur.”
- 62 M. Mitchell, “Le style, c’est l’homme.” Mitchell’s critiques are wide-ranging and well informed, pointing to Reiser’s non-critical acceptance of apologetic historiography in Luke, 371, the non-chronological ordering of Paul in his survey, 374–375, the passing over of the fact that Paul wrote letters, 376, the categorical omission of certain literary types, 377, the spare treatment given to “Hellenistic-Jewish literature”, 378, the categorical denials of the fact that “Paul used rhetorical techniques or rhetorical or philosophical terms” despite widespread countervailing evidence in both the primary and secondary literature, 379, and particular claims about Paul’s style that are not supported in the existing evidence, 382–383. Reiser’s claims about Paul’s ‘uniqueness’ result in Mitchell’s conclusion that Reiser’s work “book is not just a handbook, but is constructed as an ἀπολογία for the rightful place of the *sermo humilis* of the NT as the height of Hellenistic-Jewish literary culture,” 377.

of a spoken Hellenistic Greek have also been shown to be largely (though not entirely) indefensible by recent and in-depth linguistic studies.⁶³

Certain scholars have been effective in characterizing Paul's language as a sort of middle register, between the Atticizing language of rhetors evidenced in advanced rhetorical works and the common language spoken in the streets and manifesting in semi-literate ostraca.⁶⁴ Specifically, the work of Lars Rydbeck has gone, in my mind, further than anyone in situating Paul's language in his contemporary socio-literary milieu.⁶⁵ Rydbeck's work is an example of new ways of thinking about literature that cut across essentialized categories widely present in scholarship such as Jewish, Christian, Hellenistic, pagan, and cultic that have little descriptive and/or explanatory value.⁶⁶ Rydbeck recognized the deficiencies of the 'vulgar/rhetorical' dualism that frequently underpinned biblical scholarship on the issue of language. He was also dissatisfied with the developments in philology that argued for the existence of a 'Jewish Greek' or a 'Biblical spoken Greek' that I touched on above.⁶⁷ His solution was to look to all the different literary styles in the times roughly contemporary to Paul and the other New Testament writers for the closest comparanda.

Rydbeck provocatively concluded that the Pauline letters, as well as the other New Testament writings, are best thought of within the category of *fachprosa*, what we might term 'fact prose', 'technical/scientific language',⁶⁸ or 'knowledge

63 T.V. Evans, *Verbal Syntax in the Greek Pentateuch: Natural Greek Usage and Hebrew Interference* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) esp. 1–4, is particularly definitive on the matter. Certainly, however, some limited crossover and influence did take place: see, e.g., G.D. Kilpatrick, "Review of Marius Reiser, *Syntax und Stil der Markusevangeliums im Licht der hellenistischen Volksliteratur*," *NT* 27.1 (1985) 99–101, for a discussion of some of Reiser's claims with respect to Mark. Note, however, Mitchell's critiques about Reiser's claims with respect to Paul, in "Le style, c'est l'homme."

64 Simcox, *The Writers of the New Testament*, 25f., does well in characterizing Paul as comfortable and proficient in his language while not demonstrating an advanced, rhetorical style.

65 L. Rydbeck, *Fachprosa, vermeintliche Volkssprache und Neues Testament: Zur Beurteilung der sprachlichen Niveauunterschiede im nachklassischen Griechisch* (Uppsala, Stockholm, 1967).

66 Norden's *Kunstprosa*, to pick an example of a scholar who proposes a new type of linguistic category, sees a series of conceptual and literary divides between Hellenism and Christianity, concluding that there is eventually a sort of compromise.

67 E.g., J.H. Moulton, N. Turner, A.D. Nock.

68 It is important to note that Rydbeck's category of 'technical or scientific writing' is different than my own category of 'technical and scientific.' My own usage refers to writings concerning such subjects as mathematics and engineering, while Rydbeck is referring to prose that lacked the conventions of advanced rhetorical theory. As I will argue below,

writing', a categorization it shares with other popular philosophical-moral writings.⁶⁹ Rydbeck and others (notably Wifstrand)⁷⁰ have concluded that Paul's language is neither highly advanced rhetoric nor that ever-nebulous 'popular prose', a phrase that Rydbeck in particular critiques as undefined and lacking any descriptive utility. Indeed, work such as Rydbeck's has shown the deficiencies of a high/low linguistic dualism, pointing out the various linguistic strata encompassing technical jargon, scientific writings, and educated speech such as one might use in a classroom, to name a few. *Fachprosa* was written in a style largely lacking the elements found in advanced rhetorical theory,⁷¹ was

I find Rydbeck's broader argument to be mostly correct and very important for understanding the language and social position of Paul and the other writers of the New Testament. However, I think that Rydbeck's new socio-literary category/ies are far too nebulous and can be usefully refined in a number of ways that largely build upon, and can coexist with, Rydbeck's general conclusions.

- 69 See also H.Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1995), who explicitly follows Rydbeck in arguing that Paul's letters are written in the general administrative-philosophical prose of the day and that the gospels are most similar to other Greco-Roman biographical literature. Some of his assertions and conclusions on literacy, however, are problematic: see, e.g., 7f. for overly-positive readings about issues such as formal Hebrew and Jewish education and too strict a conception of literacy and education, as well as his later claim that "Greek and Roman religions appear to have been largely indifferent to the use of texts," 18, though he notes the exceptions of Orphism and Hermeticism. Gamble is also typical of an approach, discussed above, that sees not wider Mediterranean literary influences on early Christian texts but a specific, reified influence of "Judaism," e.g. 19f. Approaches to a specifically Jewish type of education in the ancient world run the gamut from overly-positivistic to tentative and nuanced; see I. Rabinowitz, "Pre-Modern Jewish Study of Rhetoric: An Introductory Bibliography," *Rhetorica* 3.2 (1985) 137–144, though most of the work referenced therein does not apply to this time period. Further discussion of Jewish-specific education appears in my final chapter.
- 70 A. Wifstrand, *Epochs and Style: Selected Writings on the New Testament, Greek Language and Greek Culture in the Post-Classical Era* (ed. L. Rydbeck and S.E. Porter; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) esp. 75–77.
- 71 A main characteristic of advanced rhetoric theory and other literature stemming from advanced rhetorical training was the extensive quotation and allusion to classical texts and mythology, typically from Homer and tragedy. This specific type of stylistic device is absolutely central to classicizing rhetorical texts and is wholly absent from the New Testament. This conclusion was notably disputed by E.B. Howell, "St. Paul and the Greek World," *Greece and Rome*, 2nd ser., XI (1964) 7–29, who saw a debt to Plato. Howell was definitively rebutted by H.R. Minn, "Classical Reminiscence in St. Paul," *Prudentia* 6 (1974) 93–98, though some scholars remain persuaded by his argument, e.g. S.E. Porter and

mainly concerned with relaying points of knowledge or fact,⁷² and reflected a somewhat sophisticated education in its largely fluid and error-less grammar.⁷³

Fachprosa as both type of content and type of literary style has become an increasingly popular subject, with many scholars in history, literary studies, and classics redressing the small amount of previous attention given to this type of literature and literary style.⁷⁴ Some of these works even broach questions of authorial purpose and social context, much as I do in the present study.⁷⁵ Though biblical scholars have increased their attention given to

A.W. Pitts, "Paul's Bible, His Education and His Access to the Scriptures of Israel," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 5 (2008) 9–41.

72 Cf. my literary characteristic 'Universal Claims/Assertions', detailed in chapter four.

73 Compared to a great deal of graffiti and potshards whose widespread errors in spelling and grammar seem to reflect a comparatively lesser level of semi-literacy among many urbanites; I return to the question of various educational strata in my last chapter. My point about "fluid and error-less grammar" is not definitive, however, as most manuscripts that have survived to modernity did so only through the work of copyists who often corrected mistakes of spelling and grammar, occasionally while importing mistakes all their own. Some ancient works that survived without this sort of copy-editing, such as Philodemus' *On Household Management* (PHerc. 1424), are written in a highly truncated style more reminiscent of note-taking. Types of short-hand used to save space (stenography) or time (tachygraphy) were common literary practices. We might think of such a work as Philodemus' *On Household Management* as a personal copy that would be polished before dissemination to the public (via booksellers) or one's literary circle, also a common practice.

74 In this sampling of modern scholarship, note how recently most have been published: B. Schlieben-Lange and H. Kreuzer, "Probleme und Perspektiven der Fachsprachen- und Fachliteraturforschung. Zur Einleitung," in *Fachsprache und Fachliteratur* (ed. B. Schlieben-Lange; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983) 7–26; U. Friedrich, "Fachprosa," in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft* (ed. K. Weimar; Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997) 1:559–562; K. Sallmann, "Fachliteratur," in *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike* (Stuttgart: J.G. Metzler Verlag, 1998) 4:386–389; B. Meissner, *Die technologische Fachliteratur der Antike. Struktur, Überlieferung und Wirkung technischen Wissens in der Antike (ca. 400 v. Chr.–ca. 500 n. Chr.)* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999); S. Föllinger, "Fachliteratur 1: Gattungsbegriff und Gattungsgeschichte," in *Die Literatur der archaischen und klassischen Zeit* (ed. B. Zimmermann; HGLA; Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2001) 1:289–292; T. Fögen, ed., *Antike Fachtexte / Ancient Technical Texts* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005); A. Doody, S. Föllinger, and L. Taub, "Structures and Strategies in Ancient Greek and Roman Technical Writing: An Introduction," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 43 (2012) 233–236.

75 M. Horster, and Ch. Reitz, eds., *Antike Fachschriftsteller: Literarischer Diskurs und sozialer Kontext* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2003); L. Taub and A. Doody, *Authorial Voices in Greco-Roman Technical Writing* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2009), especially the

Rydbeck, for the most part this subject, sampled in the above two footnotes, is largely ignored.⁷⁶

The subject matter of *fachprosa* dealt with generalized knowledge claims about the nature of something, such as the movement of the stars (Ptolemy), the workings of a steam engine (Hero of Alexandria), or the physical properties of certain plants (Dioscurides). Classical rhetorical theory, on the other hand, was concerned with emotional appeals in an attempt to influence an audience toward a particular outcome or attitude.⁷⁷ Modern rhetorical theory might say that these ancient *fachprosa* writers were concerned with 'argumentation' and the 'is', while classical rhetorical theorists were concerned with 'persuasion' and the 'ought'.⁷⁸ We must note here that Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus also include emotional appeals in their texts. In this regard, we see their socio-literary sphere occupying somewhat of a middle-ground between the technical-scientific sphere and the advanced rhetorical sphere, as the texts in Paul's sphere both make generalized knowledge claims about things (e.g., gods, ethics) and make emotional appeals (e.g., to believe them). Crucially, we see that the *general* form, content, and social context (including social

essay "Subjectivity and Objectivity in Latin Scientific and Technical Literature," 13–30, by H. Hine, who argues that the use of different types of address (first personal singular versus plural; second person; third person or impersonal) are fundamentally related to the style, content, and the author's framing of themselves and by extension their authority. This closely mirrors my arguments, in this chapter and following, that the different types of address are fundamental characteristics by which we should classify and compare texts.

- 76 I suspect due to both its relatively recent publication and the fact that majority of the scholarship is written in German.
- 77 Ancient rhetorical thinkers abounded in their classification of oratory as 'making the weaker argument the stronger', and various such permutations: see, e.g., Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 4.2.43, on the application of classic rhetorical education to just such judicial contexts, and Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 2.36–39, on the dangers of using classical rhetoric to bend the law. Aristotle also believed that the goal of classical rhetorical education was persuasion, and he didn't see a place for it in texts concerned with general audiences, such as historiography, law, and philosophical dialogues. He had reservations about its role, due to its tendency toward obfuscation: *Rhet.* 1419a.14. For further discussion, see D. Patrick and A. Scult, "Rhetoric and Ideology: A Debate within Biblical Scholarship over the Import of Persuasion," in *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* (ed. S.E. Porter and D.L. Stamps; JSNTSup 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 64f.
- 78 L. Thuren, "On Studying Ethical Argument and Persuasion in the New Testament," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (ed. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 468, citing Wallace.

purpose) were closely related in each type of writing, while the *specific* form, content, and social context/purpose in each socio-literary sphere differed. It is also important to note that both ancient (e.g., Quintilian) and modern (e.g., John Searle) theorization on speech and composition in society argue for the intersection of content, form, and social context,⁷⁹ what Searle calls contextual entailments, a point that is central to the present study and to which I will return in subsequent chapters.

My own project here departs from, and indeed builds on, the work of scholars like Rydbeck and Wifstrand in several ways. First, both of these authors lump together all the prose which they find to be non-vernacular and non-classicizing into a third category, which ends up encompassing all technical literature (i.e., engineering, mathematics, etc.) alongside some papyri as well as the writings of the New Testament.⁸⁰ Yet philosophical expositions by Aristotle and pharmacological works by Dioscurides in fact differ from Paul's letters in a variety of ways: different technical language, different style, hugely different subject matter, and different compositional context and social purpose. Rydbeck and Wifstrand are wise to point out that someone like Dioscurides does not fit into the category of common vernacular or highly classicizing, but they do little to justify the lumping together of all these works aside from the facts that they don't fit into any existing categories and they also share some syntactical-grammatical qualities. Rydbeck and Wifstrand laudably point to various linguistic strata within this broader category (e.g., technical jargon, scientific writings, and sophisticated speech), but these strata are not explored in further detail.

79 A persuasive and influential modern treatment can be found in the work of the philosopher of language and society John Searle: J.R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969). Searle details different kinds of speech acts and their contextual entailments. Searle's work shares with ancient rhetorical theory and my proposals here (based in part on literary and media studies; see discussion in chapter three) that matters of form, content, and social purpose (context, or contextual entailment) are fundamentally related in both textual composition and speech-acts. See also J.R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For critique and further discussion of Searle, see A. Burkhardt, ed., *Speech Acts, Meaning and Intentions: Critical Approaches to the Philosophy of John R. Searle* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), and E. Lepore and R.v.Gulick, eds., *John Searle and his Critics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

80 For some deployment of Rydbeck's conclusions with regard to the New Testament, see L. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Alexander, "Luke's Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing," *NovT* 28 (1986) 48–74.

Second, both Rydbeck and Wifstrand frame this other, new category as a middle or intermediate ground between the vernacular and the highly classicizing rhetoric. This high/middle/low language oversimplifies the tremendous amount of variation within their new category and furthermore implies a sort of hierarchy of value, with classicizing rhetoric being 'high' and popular philosophical literature being 'middle' and hence lower.⁸¹ We should not think hierarchically of types of writing but instead as different spheres of language, as I argued above. Paul, in other words, is no less 'rhetorical' or 'consciously literary' in his writing than Quintilian: Paul used rhetorical tactics to persuade, exhort, and harangue his audience, and I think most scholars would agree he was self-aware in his attempt to do so. Paul and the other authors in his sphere *chose* not to participate in the classicizing, public declamations that were common and the purview of such writers as Quintilian, and we should not simply assume this was simply due to a lack of ability, though this inability may well have existed. Authors in a given socio-literary sphere intentionally participated in a different social context with a different social purpose and different literary content, and their chosen literary style reflects that choice, implicitly and/or explicitly.

Third, both Rydbeck and Wifstrand lump together all the *fachprosa* works not only because they are neither vernacular nor highly classicizing, but also because they all share a host of linguistic and grammatical features. I do not here dispute the matter of linguistic and grammatical overlap, though I suspect this also is too simplified an account. But Rydbeck himself points out that we must add to our analysis a differentiation between grammar and style. Central to my own project is moving beyond grammatical questions (such as clause length, use of the dual, presence of Attic words, and so forth) and foregrounding the question of style (described by my specific literary criteria, listed earlier in this chapter), the latter of which I define as a particular incidence of rhetoric.⁸² As I mentioned above, the otherwise laudable analyses of Rydbeck and Wifstrand give us few tools to differentiate between different

81 I am not suggesting that Rydbeck and Wifstrand conceive of a hierarchy of value; their own writing leaves this issue unclear. I am simply suggesting that this high/middle/low language has confusing implications that are best replaced with the language of 'spheres', 'modes', or 'types' that entail a particular social context, purpose, and intentional linguistic qualities.

82 For example, an individual text has a style but not a rhetoric. Style is an individual manifestation of rhetoric, the latter of which is a broad term that denotes the more abstract concept of presentation. Style is the aggregation of those literary characteristics that define a particular work or works, and which as a general classificatory term will always be the subject of disagreement and occasionally fuzzy definitions. The style that

authors within the *fachprosa* category, despite huge differences in the style of Aristotle's *Politics*, Dioscurides' *Περὶ ὕλης ἱατρικῆς* (*De Materia Medica*), Paul's letters, and the *Gospel of Mark*.

The criteria I proposed in my introduction and which I more fully explicate in chapter four will provide these very tools of description, differentiation, and comparison, asking when and where authors use different rhetorical devices such as personification, questions, analysis of others' claims, appeals to written or divine authority, universal religious claims, and so forth. My approach will refine the useful category of *fachprosa* by further differentiating and categorizing works within its broad umbrella. By linking these issues up with other ways to think about texts and authors such as social context and educational level instead of just grammar, I will also be able to better explain why these different texts took their particular form.

Paul's Letters and Advanced Greco-Roman Rhetorical Theory

I turn next to that second camp of Pauline scholars, namely those who read Paul's letters through the lens of advanced Greco-Roman rhetorical theory. The potential intersection between classical rhetoric and the New Testament has a long history in scholarship, with one of the first explicit attempts to seek rhetorical theory in Paul being C.G. Wilke in 1843.⁸³ Subsequent attempts of different kinds were undertaken by C.F.G. Heinrici,⁸⁴ J. Weiss,⁸⁵ and E. Norden,⁸⁶ who engaged in a substantial row with Heinrici.⁸⁷ Heinrici importantly argued that while Paul's letters didn't evidence direct classical rhetorical influence, *certain rhetorical elements were common to Paul's Hellenistic milieu*,⁸⁸ a point similar to my and others' points about Paul's relationship to rhetorical theory,

I propose for Paul's letters, and other works in the same socio-literary sphere, arises inductively and takes the form of a set of literary criteria, outlined particularly in chapter three.

83 C.G. Wilke, *Die neutestamentliche Rhetorik: Ein Seitenstück zur Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* (Dresden/Leipzig: Arnold, 1843).

84 C.F.G. Heinrici, *Das zweite Sendschreiben des Apostel Paulus an die Korinther* (Berlin, 1887).

85 J. Weiss, "Beiträge zur Paulinischen Rhetorik," in *Theologische Studien* (Festschrift B. Weiss; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897) 165–274.

86 E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom vi. Jahrhundert vor Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (Leipzig, 1898).

87 Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, 2.492–498; C.F.G. Heinrici, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther* (KEK 6; Göttingen, 1900); E. Norden, *Kunstprosa*, "Nachträge" (1915) 3–4. Important to Norden's position was the fact that many of the later, highly educated church fathers denigrated Paul's style: Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, 492–510.

88 Heinrici, *Der zweite Brief*, 38–41, emphasis added.

but one that was largely not developed by later scholarship. The matter was then only occasionally picked up by later biblical scholars.⁸⁹

A crucial time in New Testament studies came with the publication of J. Muilenberg's 1968 SBL lecture,⁹⁰ where Muilenberg attacked the recent emphasis on form criticism, and argued for the utility of looking to questions of style and argumentation. This coincided with the translation of C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca's 1958 *Traité de l'Argumentation: La Nouvelle Rhétorique*, which contributed to a decades-long focus by biblical scholars on rhetorical criticism.⁹¹ The work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca was eventually joined by Lausberg's problematic *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*,⁹² both of which conflated ancient and modern theories of rhetoric, resulting in occasional uncritical deployment as historical sources.⁹³ Most scholars, however, are laudably aware of these issues and have become more sophisticated in their methodology, such as M. Mitchell,⁹⁴ G.A. Kennedy,⁹⁵

89 W.A. Jennrich, "Classical Rhetoric in the New Testament," *CJ* 44 (1948/9) 30–32. Jennrich argued against Deissmann and concluded that the New Testament and especially Paul reflected a type of 'literary *koiné*'. We find this conclusion also in Vegge, *Paulus und das antike Schulwesen*. We might think of this 'literary *koiné*' along the same lines as the *fachprosa* described by Rydbeck. Though an improvement on prior approaches, both these categories are too broad, lumping together all literature that is not advanced rhetoric or common vernacular. We should, I think, instead look to a host of different linguistic registers based on specific literary criteria and linked up with their compositional contexts, content, and social purpose, as I explain and attempt here.

90 J. Muilenberg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88.1 (March, 1969) 1–18.

91 C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, eds., *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969).

92 H. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study* (Leiden; Boston; Kohn: Brill, 1998).

93 J.D. Hester, "The Use and Influence of Rhetoric in Galatians 2:1–14," *TZ* 42 (1986) 386–408; W. Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate Over Romans," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 330–351; M. Mitchell, "Rhetorical Handbooks in Service of Biblical Exegesis: Eustathius of Antioch Takes Origen Back to School," in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune* (ed. John Fotopoulos; Leiden: Brill, 2006) esp. 350–351 in her discussion of David Aune who makes a similar point with regard to Lausberg.

94 Mitchell, "Rhetorical Handbooks in Service of Biblical Exegesis." See also M. Mitchell, "Le style, c'est l'homme: Aesthetics and Apologetics in the Stylistic Analysis of the New Testament," *NT* 51 (2009) 369–388.

95 G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

E.S. Fiorenza,⁹⁶ R.D. Anderson, Jr.,⁹⁷ and others.⁹⁸ The methodological point to be aware of here, embodied in varying degrees in scholars like Mitchell, Kennedy, Fiorenza, and Anderson, and fundamental to my own approach, is the necessity of a historically contextualized approach. Such an approach focuses on Paul's specific type of writing, namely letters, and the corollary critique of those who understand Paul as writing full-blown rhetorical treatises and/or who study Paul's letters only using categories from advanced rhetorical theory.

This latter point is especially important, as since the pioneering work of H.D. Betz⁹⁹ a huge amount of scholarship treats specific parts of Paul's letters or the letters as a whole as ancient rhetorical treatises or as specific manifestations of elements of ancient rhetorical theory.¹⁰⁰ This has happened to such an extent that one scholar lamented that "[t]he recent interest in the rhetorical form of Paul's letters has produced a snow-ball effect, in which all of Paul's writings supposedly comprise full-blown rhetorical treatises."¹⁰¹ Several scholars have taken issue with Betz's characterization of *Galatians* using categories derived from ancient rhetorical theory.¹⁰² The responses to Betz were various,

96 E.S. Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 33 (1987) 386–403.

97 R.D. Anderson, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (Leuven: Peeters, 1999) esp. 33.

98 E.g., W. Meeks, A. Malherbe, and D. Aune, all of whose work reappears in my final chapter.

99 H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); for a corrective, see W.A. Meeks, "Review of H.D. Betz, *Galatians*," *JBL* 100 (1981) 304–307.

100 The bibliography here is simply enormous, and I pick only a few representative scholars: G.W. Hansen, G.A. Kennedy, R.G. Hall, W.B. Russell, J.F.M. Smit, C.H. Cosgrove, W. Wuellner, R. Jewett, D. Hellholm, N. Elliott, D.A. Campbell, and M. Mitchell. Several of these are discussed and referenced further below.

101 J.T. Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul's Letters: A Question of Genre," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (ed. S.E. Porter; Sheffield Academic Press, JSOT Press, 1993) 322.

102 Particularly Betz's categorization of *Galatians* as a forensic text. See D.E. Aune, "Review of H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches of Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979)," *Religious Studies Review* 7 (1991) 323–328; G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) 144–152; G.W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989) 57–71; J.F.M. Smit, "The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: A Deliberative Speech," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989) 1–26, esp. 2–9; J. Schoon-Janssen, *Umstrittene "Apologien" in den Paulusbriefen: Studien zur rhetorischen Situation des 1: Thessalonicherbriefes, des Galaterbriefes und des Philipperbriefes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) esp. 70–82; C.J. Classen, "St Paul's Epistles and

with scholars providing both wide-ranging suggestions¹⁰³ and reservations,¹⁰⁴ with too few following Margaret Mitchell's more tempered appraisal that Betz argued that "Galatians contains a rhetorically styled apologetic argument,"¹⁰⁵ a characterization that sees ancient rhetorical theory as one tool among many for the study of Paul's letters. Others, meanwhile, abandoned these rhetorical categories altogether in favor of second-order analysis.¹⁰⁶

A common shortcoming of approaches similar to Betz is a focus on the organization of Paul's letters, or sections of Paul's letters, according to strictly demarcated classical rhetorical conventions.¹⁰⁷ Malcolm Heath well notes that "no one imagined that the standard three-class theory applied to all discourse, and the idea that we are obliged to classify a letter within the standard scheme would have seemed puzzling. This does not mean that discourse which falls outside the standard scheme necessarily falls outside the scope of rhetoric", making the nuanced point that even as we might reject categorizing Paul's

Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (ed. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 265–291.

- 103 Aune, "Review of H.D. Betz," 323–328; G.W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989) esp. 58–59; Smit, "The Letter of Paul to the Galatians," 1–26; J.D. Hester, "The Use and Influence of Rhetoric in Galatians 2:1–14," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 42 (1986) 386–408, esp. 408; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 144–152; see also R.G. Hall, "The Rhetorical Outline for Galatians: A Reconsideration," *JBL* 106 (1987) 277–287.
- 104 C.J. Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," esp. 286–288.
- 105 M. Mitchell, "Reading Rhetoric with Patristic Exegetes: John Chrysostom on Galatians," in *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on His 70th Birthday* (ed. Adela Yarbro Collins and Margaret Mitchell. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 333–355, esp. 333.
- 106 L. Wierenga, "Paulus en de dwaze Galaten: aanzet tot een retorische beschrijving van Paulus' brief aan de Galaten," *Radix* 14 (1988) 8–42; C.H. Cosgrove, "Arguing Like a Mere Human Being: Galatians 3.15–18 in Rhetorical Perspective," *NTS* 34 (1988) 536–549; Wierenga, *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1988).
- 107 See, e.g., S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht, *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*; A. Eriksson, T.H. Olbricht, and W. Ubelacker, eds., *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity, 2002); S.E. Porter and D.L. Stamps, eds., *Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). Malcolm Heath describes this phenomenon nicely: "Modern attempts to read Galatians with the aid of 'ancient rhetoric' are almost obsessively concerned with classifying it in terms of the three classes of oratory." M. Heath, "John Chrysostom, Rhetoric and Galatians," *Biblical Interpretation* 12 (2004) 369–400, 371.

letters *in toto* as, say, wholesale instances of deliberative or forensic rhetoric, we should nonetheless be attentive to the appearance of certain rhetorical tropes and strategies from these formal classes.¹⁰⁸ Heath, rightly I think, continues to uphold “the importance of the apologetic element which [Margaret] Mitchell highlights” even as he questions the overly strict use of rhetorical categories.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile, scholars such as Stanley Porter have emphasized that ancient rhetorical handbooks rarely discuss letter writing,¹¹⁰ and when they do they discuss not organization—a main focus of thinkers like Betz—but style.¹¹¹ Indeed, Porter’s own analysis of the ancient evidence concludes that “[i]f anything, there is a *contrast* between letters and orations.”¹¹² Betz’s influential book on *Galatians*, for example, was subject to the astute review of Wayne Meeks, whose critique is often ignored.¹¹³ In other words, I seek a middle ground between scholars who “register a wholesale resistance *in principle* to the use of rhetorical handbooks in New Testament exegesis” on the one hand,¹¹⁴ and

108 Heath, “John Chrysostom, Rhetoric and Galatians,” 372. See Heath’s skepticism about Margaret Mitchell’s stronger characterizations on 373: “there is no theoretical necessity to specify the subordination of the elements of a text to any single purpose. For the principle that a text may have multiple functions simultaneously Fairweather aptly cites the anonymous essays on ‘figured speech’ (cf. §5) that were transmitted among the works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but which probably date to the early second century.” See J. Fairweather, “The Epistle to the Galatians and Classical Rhetoric,” *TynBul* 45 (1994) 1–38, esp. 6–10.

109 Heath, “John Chrysostom, Rhetoric and Galatians,” 374. See discussion of Mitchell throughout.

110 N.b., however, Ps-Demetrius, *De elocutione* 4.223–235.

111 S.E. Porter, “The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature,” *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 103–104. Heath, for instance, argues that Paul’s non-use of classic rhetorical categories in *Galatians* resulted in him having to “devise a structure ad hoc”, while still maintaining the utility of classical rhetoric as one “convenient tool” among many for analyzing Paul’s letters, 376.

112 Idem, 112, emphasis original. We should not forget, however, that some of the rhetorical theory on orations also treated epistolography, notably Ps-Demetrius, *De elocutione* 4.223–235 and C. Iulius Victor, *Ars rhet.* 26–27, whereas others wrote treatises solely on letter writing, notably pseudo-Libanian and pseudo-Demetrius.

113 W.A. Meeks, “Review of H.D. Betz, *Galatians*,” *JBL* 100 (1981) 304–307.

114 Mitchell, “Rhetorical Handbooks,” 351, emphasis original. Here Mitchell sides with David Aune over and against Kern, Porter, and Classen. I side with Mitchell in her rejection of claims by certain scholars (she cites Kern’s *Rhetoric and Galatians*, 169–198; Anderson’s *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 124 n. 331) that “the earliest Christian exegetes—especially those who we know were trained in rhetoric, like Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine—neither employed rhetoric in their own ecclesiastical compositions, nor recognized the use of rhetorical techniques in such biblical authors as Paul,” 352–353,

scholars on the other who believe that Paul had an advanced rhetorical education and who subsequently analyze Paul's letters solely according to strictly demarcated categories from advanced rhetoric.¹¹⁵

A common shortcoming among the latter is the lack of acknowledgement of the contextual occasion for these types of rhetoric. Anderson well concludes, "in this letter Paul is better likened to a philosopher whose pupils have departed from his doctrines than to a defendant on trial, a prosecutor in court, or a politician in an assembly."¹¹⁶ Anderson's suggested compositional context is in fact fairly close to what I propose in this study, as I argue that Paul's letters and their social purpose are best likened to certain works by Epictetus and Philodemus, both philosophers who were addressing potential pupils and their behavior relative to the authors' central doctrines about the nature of the gods and the cosmos.

note particularly the supporting scholarship cited in n. 14: R.M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: SPCK, 1975); C. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der antiochenischen Exegese* (Theophania 23; Cologne and Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1974); B. Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe* (Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 18/2–3; Basel: Reinhardt, 1987); F.M. Young, "The Rhetorical Schools and Their Influence on Patristic Exegesis," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (ed. Rowan Williams; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 182–99. For a brief and telling treatment of both patristic scholarship and the primary sources with respect to Kern, see M. Mitchell, "Review of Kern, Philip H. *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998," *JR* 80.3 (2000) 497–498.

115 See the specific caution against this sole reliance in M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991) 8, 11. As with Kern, Anderson's work, while providing an important critique, also seems to overreach, with a middle ground the most likely solution: C.C. Black, "Review of R. Dean Anderson, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*. Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, 18. The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, Kampen, 1996," *BMCR* 8.5 (1997) 408–411.

116 Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 189. Note, however, Mitchell's objection to Anderson in "Rhetorical Handbooks," 353 n. 15: "This in particular is a difficulty of Anderson's study, which, for all of its industry, treats the *technai* as separable from other ways in which authors (and readers) were at home in their own literary culture (*Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*). I agree with Anderson's points about compositional context, even as I also agree with Mitchell's point that rhetorical techniques and tropes were rarely explicit or separable; my later argument that we should think of Paul as using handbooks and deploying a specific type of bureaucratic/epistolary education looks to bridge the two perspectives. See further M. Mitchell, "Review of R. Dean Anderson, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*. Kampen: Kok, 1996," *CBQ* 60.2 (1998) 356–358.

The secondary scholarship on other Pauline letters follows these general trends. Wuellner characterized *Romans* within the terms of ancient rhetorical theory, as epideictic (praise and blame rhetoric),¹¹⁷ and was soon followed by Jewett,¹¹⁸ though both divorce epideictic rhetoric from its original context. Similarly to analyses of *Galatians*, scholarship often conflates ancient and modern rhetorical theory.¹¹⁹ Some scholars have exercised some caution about using ancient rhetorical theory, even as they continue to use it as an interpretive lens.¹²⁰ The most coherent attempts to use ancient rhetorical theory are those that argue that we should look to specific rhetorical elements instead of framing *Romans* as a specific rhetorical type in its entirety.¹²¹ Work on *1 Corinthians* breaks down along similar lines, with many scholars importing ancient rhetorical theory in its entirety.¹²² Although the use of certain ancient rhetorical elements has some explanatory power, such approaches cannot sufficiently account for all the elements in Paul's letter.¹²³ As seen in Stowers' work on *Romans*, it seems best to identify specific areas of influence, such as

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- 117 W. Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate Over Romans," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976) 330–351.
- 118 R. Jewett, "Romans as an Ambassadorial Letter," *Interpretation* 36 (1982) 5–20.
- 119 A.H. Snyman, "Style and Meaning in Romans 8:31–9," *Neotestamentica* 18 (1984) 94–103; Snyman, "Stilistese Tegnieke in Romeine 7:7–13," *Ned. Geref. Teologiese Tydskrif* 27 (1986) 23–28; see also M.R. Cosby, "Paul's Persuasive Language in Romans 5," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. D.F. Watson; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 209–226.
- 120 N. Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) esp. 64–69; D.A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21–26* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).
- 121 S.K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, & Gentiles* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1994).
- 122 D.F. Watson, "Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, 231–249; see also B.L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) 56–59. Other scholars treat specific units with ancient rhetorical categories but fail to find or look for ancient parallels for this way of reading, e.g. H. van de Sandt, "1 Kor. 11, 2–16 als een retorische eenheid," *Bijdrage* 49 (1988) 410–425; J.F.M. Smit, "The Genre of 1 Corinthians 13 in the Light of Classical Rhetoric," *NovT* 33 (1991) 193–216; J.G. Sigountos, "The Genre of 1 Corinthians 13," *NTS* 40 (1994) 246–260.
- 123 B. Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995); M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991). For similar work explicitly using Mitchell's methodology, but on 2 Corinthians, see F.J. Long, *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology: The Compositional Unity of 2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Witherington, Mitchell, and Long see Paul's letters as instances of deliberative rhetoric.

Paul's use of specific rhetorical figures and techniques that can be studied comparatively, instead trying to pigeon-hole Paul's works wholesale as a certain rhetorical type.

Many of these rhetorical approaches, it seems, ignore the important critiques of several scholars, such as Philip Kern, who questioned the feasibility of Betz's readings on technical grounds¹²⁴ (although at times over-reaching),¹²⁵ or Stanley Porter and Stanley Stowers, who have questioned the relation between epistolography and advanced rhetorical education.¹²⁶ Fundamental to these latter critiques is the recognition that letter writing and an advanced rhetorical education did not completely overlap or even necessarily entail one another. We must, however, nonetheless recognize that some stylistic elements from classical rhetorical theory are in fact present in Paul's letters,¹²⁷ as some scholars have attacked even this claim, moving from Kern's methodological critique to a broader injunction against using classical rhetorical sources in the study of Paul,¹²⁸ a further step that Mitchell among others has rightly

124 P.H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 1–166.

125 M. Mitchell, "Review of Kern, Philip H. *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998," *JR* 80.3 (2000) 497–498. Mitchell effectively points to the blending of social spheres in the ancient world over and against Kern's compartmentalization, and correctly objects to Kern's framing of Christianity as discontinuous with its Greco-Roman context, a position I also critiqued above.

126 S.K. Stowers, "Apostrophe, *PROSWOPOIIA* and Paul's Rhetorical Education," in *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (ed. J.T. Fitzgerald, T.H. Olbricht, and L.M. White; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003); see also S.E. Porter, "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*.

127 See, e.g., Stowers' discussion of *prosopopoia* in *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles*. Other examples can be additionally furnished, ranging from broader techniques such as the diatribe to specific phrases or modes of structuring specific elements of an argument (so M. Mitchell, e.g.).

128 E.g., Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*. See also the response to Kern in J.-N. Aletti, "La *dispositio* rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes: Propositions de méthode," *NTS* 38 (1992) 385–401, esp. 390f., who argues for a more flexible application of the advanced rhetorical material. This is where Mitchell seems to conclude as well, arguing that not only do Paul's letters (particularly Galatians) seem to have elements of classical oratory, but that later commentators (particularly John Chrysostom) saw in Paul's letters widespread apologetic characteristics: Mitchell, "Reading Rhetoric with Patristic Exegetes." See also Mitchell's discussion, 336 and 350, of Fairweather, the latter of whom argues additionally for paraenetic and deliberative elements, which Mitchell finds unconvincing upon clear review of the evidence.

criticized.¹²⁹ Yet as Francis Cairns intriguingly notes, a common blending of genre in the ancient world occurred when elements of the “progymnasmata [certain rhetorical exercises and techniques] are absorbed within an example of another genre,” whereby these progymnastic elements’ “function is subordinated to that of the genre absorbing them, but they may still form a distinct and noticeable section,” even as the genre absorbing the progymnasmatic elements “fully retains its own generic identity and function.”¹³⁰ Understanding Paul’s language in this way—appropriating some classicizing, rhetorical elements within an ethical-philosophical epistolary framework—vastly improves on approaches that seek a complete organizational framework from advanced rhetorical theory or completely reject using advanced rhetorical theory as the source for some of Paul’s language.

It seems that few have heeded Stowers’ caution that we should not equate letter-writing with advanced rhetoric, while acknowledging the “the limited and complex relationship between epistolography and the dominant rhetorical tradition.”¹³¹ Paul *did* possess an education; indeed, his level of education likely situated him among the very small percentage of people in the first century Mediterranean who could produce a fairly complex literary work. But Paul was no rhetorician like Quintilian, nor do Paul’s letters seem to indicate that he possessed the ideal sort of education we find detailed by someone like Quintilian.¹³² Although I find it likely that students with advanced rhetorical educations would gain facility with certain compositional skills derived from

129 Mitchell, “Reading Rhetoric with Patristic Exegetes,” 335 critiques Anderson and Kern both, but importantly with specific respect to John Chrysostom’s treatment of Paul. While I stand with Kern and Anderson on their critiques of the overly formal use of classical rhetorical categories in analyzing Paul, Mitchell’s critiques with respect to their treatment of Chrysostom (and other patristic writers) are sound and well supported: note, for instance, Chrysostom’s extensive rhetorical education by Libanios as compared to Paul’s seemingly less formal and classicizing instruction.

130 F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Classical Press, 2007 [1972]) 158–159.

131 Stowers, “Apostrophe,” 368.

132 Paul gives no indication that he received any sort of formal, rhetorical education, including knowledge of things like the poets, music, and geometry advocated by Quintilian in the first book of his *Institutio Oratoria*. Paul’s only comments about his education seem to indicate that he had some type of knowledge-specific training in Scripture, probably the Septuagint: *Phil* 3:5–6 and possibly *Gal* 1:13–14. I will return to these issues extensively in my final chapter, suggesting that Paul had both a preliminary, grammar-based education, a knowledge-specific education of the Septuagint, and further literary training in a bureaucratic or other ad hoc setting, likely supplemented with handbooks. Quintilian’s ideal rhetorical education seems to be limited to those at the highest levels of wealth and social status, such as Philodemus.

an epistolary-specific education such as we might find in a bureaucratic setting, the inverse is by no means true and we have evidence for specialized letter-writers and letter-writing education.¹³³ Given the shortcomings in thinking of Paul as advanced rhetor, it seems more prudent to think of Paul as a trained letter-writer instead of rhetorician.¹³⁴

The Diatribe in Paul's Letters and other Ancient Texts

One of the other influential ways that scholars have characterized Paul's letters vis-à-vis other ancient texts is by analyzing certain Pauline letters according to the ancient technique known as the "diatribe."¹³⁵ Despite some imprecision in the concept's definition, the diatribe seems to have been an ancient rhetorical and/or literary technique (but *not* genre) whereby a teacher attempted to both instruct and morally improve their listeners through a combination of censure, encouragement, dialogue, questioning, and formal argument.¹³⁶ Scholars have identified ancient examples of the diatribe in a wide range of sources, most notably in Bion of Borysthenes, Cicero, Dio Chrysostom, Epictetus, Horace, Maximus of Tyre, Musonius Rufus, Philo, Plutarch, Seneca, and Teles.¹³⁷

133 This is one of the central points of my final chapter, where it receives full expansion and argument. For epistolary-specific education, we have as evidence handbooks tailored toward letter writing: Papyrus Bononiensis, in O. Montevecchi, ed., *Papyri Bononienses* (Milan, 1953), where the student seems to be following a handbook, and two handbooks titled *Tupoi Epistolikoi* and *Epistolimaioi Characteres*, discussed further in my final chapter. Several older works contain good discussions of the presence and importance of epistolary handbooks: A. Erman, *Die Literatur der Ägypter* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1923) 252–260; W. Schmid, "Ein epistolographisches Übungsstück," *Neue Jahrbücher f. Philol. u. Paedag.* 145 (1892) 692–699; U. Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (ältere Funde)* (Berlin; Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1927); Koskenniemi, *Studien*, 57–59. For recent discussion see the work of H.-J. Klauck, A. Malherbe, C. Poster, and S.K. Stowers.

134 So M. Dibelius, C. Poster, J.T. Reed, M.L. Stirewalt, Jr., S.K. Stowers, and U.v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.

135 From the Greek *diatribē*, derived from the verb *diatribein*, literally "to rub away, to wear at," and metaphorically "to focus on something, to spend time doing."

136 Two good definitions can be found in S.K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (SBLDS 57; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981) esp. 76–78, and D.A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Reading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007) 535.

137 A list subject to debate; see discussion in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 48, and Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 243. For Horace, see S. Sharland, *Horace in Dialogue: Bakhtinian Readings in the Satires* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010) 11–23. For Seneca see the excellent and intriguing work of H. Cancik, *Untersuchungen zu Senecas epistulae morales* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1967).

This characterization has been extremely useful, and a productive way forward in thinking about certain aspects of Paul's literary style. Several scholars investigating the diatribe, furthermore, have concluded that the description and explanation of a given literary style relies on identifying its particular intersection of form, content, and social context; the word *letteraturizzazione* was even coined to describe the movement from a socio-rhetorical to a literary medium.¹³⁸ Indeed, the element of social practice attached to particular types of literature is crucial to understanding my socio-literary spheres, a point that is likewise often made with respect to the diatribe, a literary style that closely related to teaching in a social setting.¹³⁹

Despite the many insights derived from applying the diatribe to Paul's letters, this diatribal approach to Paul's letters has two main limitations. The first is that only certain sections of Paul's letters can be accurately described as a diatribe, or perhaps diatribal. The second is the confusion, both ancient and modern, surrounding the precise definition of the word "diatribe."

The first limitation is quite clear, insofar as several of the main scholars who have used a diatribal reading of Paul's letters are laudably explicit that the diatribe can only describe and explain certain sections of certain Pauline letters. Largely these sections are confined to *1 Corinthians* and *Romans*. The identification of the diatribe, or at least elements of it, go as far back as Bultmann and his claim that it was tied to the 'popular philosophy' of Stoicism and Cynicism,¹⁴⁰ in particular by looking at *1 Corinthians*, which Bultmann claimed took place within the social setting of public preaching.¹⁴¹ A.J. Malherbe, to cite an influential example in applying the diatribe to Paul's letters, referred

138 Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 65.

139 Stowers points to the "rather clear correlation between style or form and sociological situation," *The Diatribe*, 38, and the fact that "[t]he use to which the language of the work is being put, its function or purpose, is central to the concept of genre," 50. Stowers follows the astute observations of Puelma Piwonka and Ernst Schmidt that specifically highlight the role of the social setting and purpose in the delineation of literary form and content, here with specific regard to diatribe and satire: M. Puelma Piwonka, *Lucilius und Kallimachos: Zur Geschichte einer Gattung der hellenistisch-römischen Poesie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1949), and E.G. Schmidt, "Diatribe und Satire," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift Universität Rostock* 15 (1966) 507–515.

140 R. Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910).

141 Idem. Bultmann saw a sort of "preaching" to mass audiences, by the Stoics especially, and argued that Paul did the same. Both understandings have been largely rejected, with understandings of more piecemeal and intimate gatherings, ranging from school settings to households to meal gatherings to collegia-type groupings.

to the “Hellenistic diatribe” when attempting to explain specific Pauline quotations of a “proverbial character” such as in 1 Cor 15:33.¹⁴² This was followed by T. Shmeller's work,¹⁴³ again primarily focusing on specific sections in 1 Cor and particularly 1 Cor 15, and most recently by J.R. Asher who has argued for the diatribe's presence in wider sections of 1 Cor 15, specifically “at least” 1 Cor 15:29–36.¹⁴⁴

S.K. Stowers' influential monograph on the diatribe in *Romans*, meanwhile, notably focused only on certain sections in that letter, in particular 2:1–3:8.¹⁴⁵ D.A. Campbell, picking up from Stowers, reads the diatribe in only a particular section, directing his monograph entirely around Rom 3:21–26.¹⁴⁶ Other examples can be easily multiplied, regardless of whether or not one agrees with the original reading given by Stowers for Rom 2–3.¹⁴⁷

Rare, and not widely accepted, is the attempt to read an entire letter as a diatribe.¹⁴⁸ There seems to be a consensus that substantial other sections of *Romans* outside of chapters 2–3, for example, cannot be characterized as diatribe.¹⁴⁹ L.E. Keck, for instance, argues that ancient rhetoricians viewing Paul's letters, such as Quintilian, would have clearly identified the diatribe form (among other rhetorically-accepted techniques), but only in Rom 3:1–9 and 9:14–24.¹⁵⁰ Such ancient rhetoricians, meanwhile, would have been

142 Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, 42–43, et al.

143 T. Schmeller, *Paulus und die “Diatribe”: Eine vergleichende Stilinterpretation* (NA 19; Münster; Aaschendorff, 1987) 332–388.

144 J.R. Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15* (HUzT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 55–57. Asher usefully cites several examples following Bultmann, 55 n. 78.

145 Stowers, *The Diatribe*.

146 D.A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Rom 3.21–26* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

147 To name but a few, representing diverse views of *Romans*: J.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas, TX: Word, 1988); L.T. Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001); R. Longenecker, “The Focus of Romans: The Central Role of 5.1–8.39 in the Argument of the Letter,” in *Romans and the People of God* (ed. S.K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999) 49–69.

148 C. Song, *Reading Romans as a Diatribe* (Studies in Biblical Literature 59; New York: Peter Lang, 2004). The attempt to read an entire letter as a diatribe is usually tied to the misunderstanding that the diatribe was a defined literary genre.

149 In what represents a mainstream view, D.J. Moo states the matter thus: “In any case, while parts of Romans use this diatribe style (e.g., 2:1–3:8), the letter as a whole cannot be classified as a diatribe,” in Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996) 15.

150 Keck, “*Pathos in Romans?*,” 85. Keck here draws from R.D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 33. Keck's list of other, identifiable “rhetorical devices”: “anaphora (1:24, 26, 28),

confused by other factors, such as Paul's wide use of *paraenesis* and Scriptural quotation, his modification of epistolary convention, and his abrupt shift to narrative.¹⁵¹

The same appears to be true when attempting to read the diatribe in other texts roughly contemporary to Paul's letters. Examples of diatribal literary features, such as apostrophe and *prosōpopoiia*, certainly exist. Yet features like apostrophes are widely separated and dispersed across various texts,¹⁵² suggesting that, as with Paul's letters, we should read particular sections as diatribal instead of entire works as such.

If we thus understand diatribe as appearing only in certain sections of certain Paul's letters, other sections of these letters (e.g., 1 Cor 1–9) and even other letters in their entirety (e.g., *Galatians*; *Philippians*) cannot be characterized as diatribes or diatribal. If we want to understand Paul's letters in their entirety, therefore, we must think of a way to characterize them that contains all of the letters and all of their respective sections. The same goes for our comparanda, which may exhibit diatribal characteristics at points, but which still require a new description that does justice to their entirety. My own approach thus incorporates certain features from the diatribe but also from elsewhere, and looks at broader patterns of their appearance in all of Paul's letters and certain other roughly contemporaneous texts in their entirety.

The second limitation to the diatribal reading of Paul's letters is the confusion behind the term "diatribe."¹⁵³ The term's content has been disputed since

apostrophe (2:1, 17), diatribe (3:1–9, 9:14–24), metaphor (11:17–24), prosopopoeia (7:7–25), paronomasia (1:28–29, 31), synkrisis (5:12–21)," 85.

- 151 Keck, "Pathos in Romans?," 86–87. Keck's conclusion, that we need a "new rhetorical genre" for *Romans* to explain these apparent innovations, is not too far from my own conclusions that we need a new way to describe Paul's letters. However, his suggestion of "church rhetoric" (from T.H. Olbricht, "An Aristotelian Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," 1990) re-inscribes the understanding of early Christianity and its literature as unique that I seek in part to correct.
- 152 Stowers, "Apostrophe, *PROSWPOPOIIA* and Paul's Rhetorical Education", 364–365, identifies in an admittedly "very incomplete survey" instances in Philo, Epictetus, Seneca, Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 16.10), and others. He found that "[s]udden, unintroduced apostrophe is very common and seems to be the norm in moral and philosophical literature. It already occurs in the Attic Orators," 365; see his discussion also in *Diatribe and Romans*, 86–93.
- 153 Cancik, *Untersuchungen zu Senecas epistulae morales*, 47 n. 79 writes that "Die Frage nach der Diatribe ist noch nicht geklärt," a position echoed by R.D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 243, seeing "no real consensus in defining the precise contours of this so-called style itself." Various other ways of describing and categorizing certain of these texts, authors, and this particular set of features have also been suggested, ranging

Bultmann's work initially attempted to understand Paul's letters as a form of diatribe. Furthermore, many of the examples that modern scholars consider clear instances of diatribe—Teles, Dio Chrysostom, Maximus of Tyre, and Musonius Rufus—were not considered diatribes in the ancient world but instead as *dialexeis*,¹⁵⁴ which we might translate as “dialogic argument.” A brief sketch of scholarship reveals that defining the term precisely has always been a problem and site of contention.

Bultmann first described the diatribe as a distinct “Gattung” (genre, type) derived from public preaching used by Stoics and Cynics (and then Paul),¹⁵⁵ as opposed to intentionally literary products (such as Seneca's letters) that mirrored Bultmann's division between letters and epistles.¹⁵⁶ Bultmann's 1910 approach was shortly criticized in two 1911 monographs. Adolf Bonhöffer argued that the overlaps between Paul's letters and diatribes were not only extremely limited (parts of 1 Cor and Gal, and Rom 3–8, 9–11, and 14–15), but that Bultmann's characterization of the diatribe as a particular Gattung was over-wrought.¹⁵⁷ Otto Halbauer, meanwhile, more forcefully rejected Bultmann's Gattung argument by looking to the ancient descriptions that didn't use “diatribe” in a technical, literary way as Bultmann describes but simply as a description for pedagogical activity.¹⁵⁸

The scholarship since has seen a back and forth between scholars building upon Bultmann's original approach on the one hand, and those siding with Bultmann's critics on the other. In the former camp, Thomas Schmeller accepted Bultmann's more rigid view of genre as well as his view that diatribe was connected to “popular philosophy,”¹⁵⁹ and defined diatribe as an oral and

from Throm's “thesis” to Halbauer's *dialexeis* to Thyen's “homily”: H. Throm, *Die Thesis. Ein Beitrag zu ihrer Entstehung und Geschichte*. Rhetorische Studien 17 Heft. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1932); O. Halbauer, *De diatribis Epicteti* (Leipzig: Robert Noske, 1911); Thyen, Hartwig, *Der Stil der jüdisch-hellenistischen Homilie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955) esp. 7.

154 Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 28–29; see also his description of Paul's letters being described as didactic and not diatribal in the ancient sources, 245 n. 26.

155 Bultmann, *Der Stil*, 107–109.

156 See the summary in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 18–30.

157 A. Bonhöffer, *Epiktet und das Neue Testament* (Gießen: Topelmann, 1911) esp. 179 n. 1.

158 Halbauer, *De diatribis Epicteti*.

159 S.K. Stowers, “Review of T. Schmeller, *Paulus und die “Diatribe”: Eine vergleichende Stilinterpretation* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1987),” *JBL* 108.3 (1989) 538–542. For a more summary response to Schmeller's work, see H.D. Betz, “Review of T. Schmeller, *Paulus und die “Diatribe”: Eine vergleichende Stilinterpretation* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1987),” *JTS* 40 (1989) 197–200. For a more positive response, see, e.g., D.E. Aune, *Jesus, Gospel Tradition*

literary phenomenon present in wider-scale street preaching by Greco-Roman philosophers.¹⁶⁰ In the latter camp, Stowers critiqued formal views of genre, as well as earlier understandings of “popular philosophers,”¹⁶¹ to forward a narrower definition of diatribe that pertained to philosophical schools.¹⁶² I am sympathetic to both critiques, and would add to the latter recent work that productively broadens the category of “popular philosophy” to include general philosophical-literary topoi and concepts.¹⁶³

A variety of other more recent approaches have rejected the view of diatribe as a technical, literary genre and replaced it with a more nuanced view of diatribe as a second-order category defined by a set of particular characteristics shared across certain texts to varying degrees. Helmut Rahn, for instance, argued that the appearance of certain, shared literary features across a particular set of texts necessitated description by a broader adjective that allowed for some flexibility in application. He thus described the diatribe as not “*einheitliche Literaturform*,” but rather “*sie verbindet sich nur mit anderen literarischen Formen als etwas erlebnishaft ‘Diatribenartiges’*.”¹⁶⁴ Suzanne Sharland came to a similar conclusion in her monograph on Horace, suggesting that we not discard the term, but rather replace a strictly bounded view of genre with a view of diatribe as a “*mode*, a collection of stylistic devices that together

and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity (WUZNT 303; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013) 247–248, who finds Schmeller’s wider categorization more useful and reflective of our diverse sources.

160 Schmeller, *Paulus und die “Diatriben”*, 9–13, 41–53.

161 Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 48–76.

162 Idem, *The Diatribe*, 76–78. Stowers partially excepts Philo, “about whom we lack information.”

163 J.C. Thom, “Paul and Popular Philosophy,” in *Paul’s Graeco-Roman Context* (ed. C. Breytenbach; Peeters: Leuven, 2015) 47–74. Thom finds unnecessarily narrow the description of “popular philosophy” in, e.g., A. Oltramare, *Les origines de la diatribe romaine* (Lausanne: Payot, 1926) 17–31, and M.O. Goulet-Cazé, “Popularphilosophie,” in *DNP* 10 (2001) 154–155 = “Popular Philosophy,” in *BNP* 11 (2007) 617–618. Both Oltramare and Goulet-Cazé seem to have in mind the older view of a defined, public speech-tradition that Stowers critiques. Thom adds to this category specific texts such as the Pythagorean “Golden Verses”, Cleanthes’ “Hymn to Zeus”, the Pseudo-Aristotelian “On the Cosmos” (*De mundo*), Hierocles’ *Elements of Ethics*, several works by Plutarch, and Maximus of Tyre’s *Orations*.

164 Rahn, Helmut. *Morphologie der antiken Literatur: Eine Einführung*. Die Altertumswissenschaft (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969) 159; see further 153–156 and ns. 171 and 172.

create a certain effect in a text."¹⁶⁵ Stowers himself argued that, despite some of the terminological confusion both ancient and modern, the "fact still remains that an extensive body of writings by the so-called diatribal authors exists which reveal common elements of style, forms of argumentation and use of tradition."¹⁶⁶ Because the diatribe is mostly (but importantly not entirely) our second-order designation for the real phenomenon of an ancient instructional style, and was not an explicit ancient rhetorical or literary genre, the bundle of techniques identified as diatribal could and did appear in any number of various genres.

Methodologically speaking, the arguments of Rahn, Sharland, Stowers, and others are extremely similar to my own approach that seeks to extract second-order categories from a variety of texts in order to describe and then compare them. Indeed, I do not find the particular fuzziness of the definition of diatribe to be a shortcoming. Instead, diatribe—like many other conceptual, rhetorical, and literary frameworks in the ancient as well as modern worlds—was understood differently by different people, deployed in various ways contingent on varying contexts and social purposes, and was subject to innovation and combination with other frameworks. This variance reflects diatribe's widespread presence and influence.

These points notwithstanding, this definitional confusion (both ancient and modern) is an obstacle to transparent, objective comparison. Identifying certain authors or sections of certain texts to be "diatribal" is only useful if we are able to describe the extent that these diatribal features occur in a given text and how this particular set of diatribal features function both vis-à-vis one another and within the form and function of the text as a whole.¹⁶⁷ Preferably, we would do so in a way that lent itself to more quantitative and transparent comparison between texts, to see the extent to which diatribal texts overlap, where they overlap, and in which ways.

165 Sharland, *Horace in Dialogue*, 23, emphasis original. I argued for a similar type of conceptualization, seeing literature in terms of modes, spheres, or types, as a corrective on formal genre, essentialized categories, and hierarchical views of what constituted 'literary.'

166 Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 29.

167 Idem, 39–40: "No two literary or subliterate genres, or even styles, can be satisfactorily compared by a mere listing of parallel characteristics. This is because a single characteristic is rarely, if ever, unique to one literary type . . . At least two other things are necessary for adequate description and comparison of a piece of literature. First, in order to characterize a work as a certain style or genre there must be a certain typical accumulation of characteristics which are combined and ordered in typical ways. Second, these individual features should function within the work in a typical way."

My own approach attempts to do just this, but to do so with specifications of which exact characteristics comprise my particular socio-literary sphere, with quantitative data to see the amount of each particular characteristic in each text, and a holistic view of the texts that will allow for objective comparison between them according to these characteristics. In this way, I seek to overcome the first limitation of viewing Paul's letters as diatribes—that these analyses are limited to only certain sections and/or certain letters—by broadening my comparison to all available textual data. I also seek to overcome the second limitation—that there is no universally recognized definition of diatribe nor even of its specific features—by specifying a set of particular characteristics that I can apply to any text to achieve an objective, transparent, and quantitative comparison. One could pursue a comparative study only with respect to inductively derived diatribal characteristics, and such a study would be useful and I suspect illuminating. But a comparison between texts and authors *in toto* requires a wider lens.

Scholarship Characterizing the Broader Greco-Roman Literary Landscape

I will return to these issues more expansively in subsequent chapters when I situate my own methodology from the perspective of literary studies, provide my specific textual readings, and forward my own conclusions about the contexts and social purposes of Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus. For now it suffices to recognize that approaches attempting to characterize Paul's letters as representing a common vernacular—Jewish or not—or advanced Greco-Roman rhetoric have been unable to adequately describe Paul's letters, have been the subject of several fundamental critiques, and by using as comparanda only an extremely limited range of texts have also failed to situate Paul more widely in his ancient Mediterranean socio-literary context. As we will see, however, much scholarship pertaining to the ancient Mediterranean literary landscape has done little better, suffering from critical shortcomings that, as we saw with Paul's letters, artificially limit attempts at comparison and import certain faulty methodological assumptions into understandings and descriptions of types of literature.

I thus turn to scholarship that attempts to describe the broader shape of the ancient Mediterranean Greco-Roman literary landscape preceding and contemporary to Paul. This work has been predominantly the domain of classicists, a fact that naturally stems from their disciplinary specialty, but a fact that

also highlights how few efforts have been made by scholars of early Christian literature to undertake broader literary comparisons on content, style, and social purpose. Although I critique many works below, I acknowledge that for the most part these are survey works whose inherently broad strokes necessarily leave much material untreated.

Nonetheless, the fact that classicists' surveys so rarely touch on certain types of literature (the types I contend are closest in form, content, and social purpose to Paul's letters) does speak to the fact that certain types of literature are privileged over others in their accounts. This fact has consequences for how the wider literary landscape of the ancient Mediterranean is understood by scholars in a host of other disciplines, such as Pauline studies or early Christianity. Many biblical scholars take their cues on subjects such as first century Greco-Roman literature from the work of classicists, and thus scholarship such as I review below has significant ripple effects in the field of Pauline studies and biblical studies more generally.

To find proper Pauline comparanda in order to effectively situate Paul's letters in their wider literary context, we must take a closer look at literature of the first centuries BCE and CE. Primary sources of this era demonstrate an extremely wide and complex range of literary style and content, a fact which in itself merits a re-framing of how we describe, categorize, and understand literature of that time. Rydbeck's and Wifstrand's conclusion that Paul's writings should be understood outside of a high/low linguistic dualism, and especially their further conclusion that Paul's writings share this quality with other roughly concurrent prose writings, implies that Greek literature itself—not simply Pauline or biblical literature—must be understood apart from a high/low linguistic dualism. I generally agree with both their approaches and conclusions, but most scholarship attempting to categorize Greek literature contemporary with Paul does not seem to share a similar view. Scholarly overviews tend to ignore the scientific and popular-philosophical prose literature altogether and/or continue to re-inscribe the same high/low dualism that we saw in Pauline scholarship.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, scholarly overviews tend to over-

168 There are exceptions, such as the recent work of Roger Bagnall, who argues that we should focus on types of writing that are not conventionally thought of as literary, what he calls a continuum of "everyday writing," as well as focus on texts as embodied objects in wider cultural practices: R.S. Bagnall, *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2011). Bagnall's work, however, mostly focuses on the semi-literate papyri and does not significantly treat the scientific or popular-philosophical prose literature.

simplify categories of ancient literature¹⁶⁹ or unhelpfully categorize via exhaustive lists,¹⁷⁰ the latter of which calls to mind Jonathan Z. Smith's caution that 'map is not territory.'¹⁷¹

The *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* is a paradigmatic example of scholastic shortcomings on the broader subject of Greek linguistic typologies and the general ancient Mediterranean Greco-Roman literary landscape, both for the representative nature of its methodological shortcomings as well as its pre-eminence as a reference guide for the field.¹⁷² Although it identifies a host of kinds of literature in addition to the established literary canons,¹⁷³ it does not posit any overlaps between these allegedly marginal types and the classicizing literature better known to modernity. Furthermore, the *Cambridge History* posits undue influence of classicizing, canonical texts on Greek culture and language,¹⁷⁴ and this despite the laudably explicit admission of a very small amount of evidence within a limited geographical area.¹⁷⁵ When the *History* treats the profusion of different literary types in the early Roman Empire, it lists "Geography, History, Literary Criticism,"¹⁷⁶ including such authors as Strabo and Dionysius of Halicarnassus before skipping ahead in time to the writings of Maximus of Tyre and the so-called Longinus. The only discussion of language and linguistic categorization takes the familiar form of the highly educated and classicizing work of Demetrius.¹⁷⁷ In the end, the *Cambridge History* re-inscribes a canonical and classicizing notion of Greek

169 A trend characteristic of many recent scholarly overviews, e.g., K.J. Dover, *Ancient Greek Literature* (2nd ed.; Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), discussed further below.

170 A trend characteristic of older German scholarship, some of which concluded that Paul's letters were Jewish and thus qualitatively different from other classical literature, e.g., F. Susemihl, *Geschichte der Griechischen Literatur in der Alexandrinerzeit* (Leipzig, 1891).

171 J.Z. Smith, *Map is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). The origins of the phrase and concept can be found in the work of the philosopher Alfred Korzybski (1931) and in Jorge Luis Borge's short story "On Rigor in Science" (originally "Del rigor en la ciencia," 1946), among other places.

172 P.E. Easterling and B.M.W. Knox, eds., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature I: Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

173 Idem, 12.

174 Idem, 35.

175 Idem, 17f.

176 Idem, 642.

177 Idem, 648.

literature during this period, largely ignoring internal variance and other forms of literature.¹⁷⁸

Many scholars who re-inscribe canonical, classicizing judgments feel the consequent need to explain why there is a drop-off in classicizing literature in the second century BCE until the second century CE and the rise of the Second Sophistic. The very fact that this seems to require explanation is itself indicative of a narrow view of Greek literature that the only texts that are seen as valuable, literary, and/or true to some notion of an alleged authentic Greek culture are those reflecting advanced rhetorical theory or Atticizing language/grammar such as found in the works of authors like Quintilian, Demetrius, or Dionysius of Halicarnassus. This methodological bias is further reflected in the explanations sought for an alleged decline.

K.J. Dover, for example, sees this loss in "originality" as due to "an exhaustion" born of difficult historical circumstances,¹⁷⁹ an explanation positing a golden age by which following periods must be judged as suffering from "a general decline."¹⁸⁰ It is unsurprising that Dover is solely concerned with texts that are "literary,"¹⁸¹ that the texts which are deemed literary are those identified with the unhelpfully broad term "Hellenism,"¹⁸² and that Dover claims that "the technical works which survive are not literary and can be barely mentioned . . . scientific writings were purely technical, with no literary claims or qualities."¹⁸³ It is telling that Dover's analysis lacks explicit, critical criteria by which he makes these judgments as well as an absence of a close reading of the language of such technical treatises. The sweeping nature of these conclusions is far from atypical, and reflects both the fundamental methodological issues of dichotomous high/low linguistic register (here, literary versus non-literary) and essentialized categories (here, Hellenism) that I identified in my review of Pauline scholarship above.

178 It does target the influence of the philosophers, but this influence is rendered almost solely in literary form, 28. This focus on the literary at the expense of conceptual influence ignores the fundamental interrelation between content and form that undergirds this study and that is fundamental to both ancient and modern rhetorical theory.

179 Dover, *Ancient Greek Literature*.

180 Idem, 146; see also 157ff.

181 Idem, 135.

182 Idem, 146.

183 Idem, 135–136.

Interestingly for my purposes here, Dover does at one point touch on linguistic categorization beyond simply labeling some things ‘Hellenic/Attic’ and others not. In his discussion of post-50 BCE literature, he mentions the re-appearance of classicizing/Atticizing works: “When the renaissance began in the late first century AD, the language of Plato, Xenophon, and the orators was the norm for literary Greek, and the spoken language—the *koiné*—was tolerated only for technical and sub-literary purposes.”¹⁸⁴ The dichotomy posited here between high, literary, Attic Greek and the low, vernacular, non-literary *koiné* should be already familiar to the reader from my discussion of Pauline scholarship. Again, no linguistic criteria are developed for such labeling except for non/Hellenic and non/Attic, and no middle-ground is offered in this categorization that could situate authors such as Paul, Philodemus, or Epictetus.

Arrian, meanwhile, seems to be a particularly interesting example for classicists, as the informal nature of the composition of Epictetus’ *Discourses* (what seem to be edited lecture notes) are noted by Said and Trédé as “written in the vernacular without rhetorical adornments, in which Arrian claims to have completely withdrawn behind his model.”¹⁸⁵ Said and Trédé take Epictetus’ alleged comments at face value in seeking the reason for this linguistic form, as Epictetus professes to seek nothing “but to incite the minds of his hearers to the best things.”¹⁸⁶ This comment is particularly interesting, for Epictetus’ non-classicizing and informal language is paired with a philosophical aim: the transmission of concrete knowledge that is explicitly divorced from rhetorically sophisticated exegesis.¹⁸⁷ Said and Trédé do not expand on this insight that form is tied to content, however, either with respect to the relation of form and content or regarding linguistic registers more broadly.

One of the authors to explicitly treat the style of what Rydbeck would term a ‘professional prose writer’ is H.J. Rose.¹⁸⁸ In a way similar to other attempts at categorizing Greek literature, Rose sums up the style of the technical writers:

Clearly, none of the above subjects [Rose treats mathematical writings almost exclusively] give much scope for purely literary treatment; it may be said generally that these technical writers have plain, straightforward styles, free from misplaced attempts at eloquence. They write in the

184 Idem, 156.

185 S. Said and M. Trédé, *A Short History of Greek Literature* (London: Routledge, 1999) 42.

186 *Preface*, 5, from Said and Trédé, 142.

187 Ibid.

188 H.J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Literature: From Homer to the Age of Lucian* (4th ed.; London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1950).

Greek of their own day, that is in the 'common dialect' (*koiné*), for the most part; Archimedes uses his native Sicilian Doric for several works. The worst, stylistically, is perhaps Ptolemy, who is prone to heavy, over-long sentences and a certain pretentious pedantry.¹⁸⁹

Two elements of this comment merit further mention. First, the statement that technical prose is "free from misplaced attempts at eloquence" implies that rhetorical eloquence is only suitable for certain types of literature, that any type of technical content disbars the possibility of rhetorical devices, and that Attic/classicizing eloquence is the only kind of eloquence. This also seems to posit the same sort of rhetorical dualism that we have seen elsewhere. Second, Rose again provides a value judgment about a certain non-rhetorical author's language, here Ptolemy, without providing criteria for such a judgment beyond characterizing his sentences as "heavy" and "over-long." This lack of criteria for analysis combined with subjective valuations about particular texts is an impediment to properly contextualizing, classifying, and comparing texts.

Although Rose does touch on the language of the first century CE and following, he focuses on explaining the rise of Atticism and the role of Asianism while again neither precisely defining either, a problem especially endemic in scholarship on the latter.¹⁹⁰ He does mention, however, that Philodemus' writings "have a certain stylistic interest,"¹⁹¹ although he remains unclear on his stylistic criteria. Philodemus, as the reader may recall, is the author of several texts that I believe provide the closest comparanda for Paul. Some of the texts within the broader Greco-Roman literary landscape that defy easy categorization by classicists are the very ones, in other words, that we should be targeting in our comparisons with Paul's letters.

Albin Lesky is notable for occasionally providing specific linguistic criteria, naming as examples of Attic language the inclusion of long speeches, Attic words, and extended sentences.¹⁹² Of even greater interest, however, is Lesky's

189 Idem, 381–382.

190 The existence of Asianism as a real historical-linguistic movement has been in dispute since Wilamowitz's influential argument that 'Asianism' was a polemical category invented by those desiring a return to an earlier literary period and its attendant features. See U.v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Textgeschichte der griechischen Lyriker* (Berlin, 1900) esp. 1–8.

191 Idem, 410.

192 A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966) 845f. Interestingly, Lesky does identify a group of letters by Alciphron that are extremely Attic in form. Though we might be tempted to see these as counter-examples to the conclusion that letters usually departed in style from advanced rhetorical theory, we must remember

awareness of the state of the field of literary-typological classification when discussing Dexippus (third century CE):

Dexippus' style was praised by Photius (*F Gr Hist* 100 T 5), sharply condemned by Niebuhr, warmly commended by Norden, censured by Schwartz as obscure and far-fetched, while Jacoby is non-committal. *It is obvious that a standard is lacking* which will keep our criticism at least free from the grossest subjectivity.¹⁹³

This quote provides two related points significant for my present discussion. First, learned scholars can completely disagree about the quality of a given author's style. This wide scattering of opinion on some texts underscores the fact that discussions of style, as Lesky himself notes, are often reduced to competing, subjective judgments.

This is closely tied to my second point, which is that there is no objective or agreed-upon standard by which to judge certain authors' style as better or worse, high or low, rhetorical or vernacular. Most scholars would agree that archaizing vocabulary, the use of the dual, and the presence of the optative, for example, are clear indicators of a highly educated author affecting a classicizing, rhetorical pose. Yet the number of agreed-upon examples of Atticizing¹⁹⁴ is small relative to the amount of syntactical and stylistic decisions made by a given author. We need a more precise approach that incorporates a wider set of textual criteria. The subjective judgment of whether or not a given author's style is good/bad or high/low isn't the goal. Rather, I seek to develop

that these are fictional literary pieces and thus do not reflect the typical letter sent in the ancient world. Nonetheless, they are interesting for their use of epistolographic medium to broach different sorts of content. As I discuss more at length in my final chapter, letters were by definition a flexible medium, and we find them used as such, for example, in Epicurus' letter to Herodotus, which is essentially a philosophical exposition. For Alciphron's letters, see *Alciphron, Literally and Completely Translated From the Greek, with Introduction and Notes* (Athens: Privately Printed for the Athenian Society, 1896) esp. v–xvii.

193 Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, 851, emphasis added.

194 For the historical and linguistic underpinnings of the Attic revival, see K. Goudriaan, *Over classicisme: Dionysius van Halicarnassus en zijn program van welsprekendheid, cultuur en politiek* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1989) esp. 595–677; see further S.F. Bonner, *The Literary Treatises of Dionysius of Halicarnassus: A Study in the Development of Critical Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939).

transparent, testable, empirical standards that are both qualitative and quantitative that we can apply to multiple authors as a tool for description and comparison.¹⁹⁵ Such an analysis will not, of course, be completely free of subjectivity.¹⁹⁶ But by presenting my goals transparently and going about my analysis with explicit criteria, I hope to facilitate an empirical approach that can be subjected to improvements or corrections in specific, constructive ways, and that can allow for evaluations that make reference to neither valuations (e.g., 'non-literary', 'overly ornamental') nor reified categories ('Hellenic', 'Jewish').

M. Hadas seems to come closest to my own opinion on the relation between form and content. Hadas describes prose as "the medium for all that was utilitarian, intellectually or spiritually, whether for setting forth the results of investigation in mathematics or astronomy or medicine, in music or literature, in history or geography, or for providing earnest guidance for the lives of men."¹⁹⁷ We find again the relation of practical knowledge to prose, though unfortunately Hadas does not detail linguistic features that might delineate prose from the "ornate prose" he attributes to the Second Sophistic.¹⁹⁸

Although Hadas rarely specifies stylistic elements, he intriguingly identifies a host of authors roughly contemporary to Paul as meriting further consideration, such as Posidonius, Strabo, Josephus, Pausanias, and Arrian/Epictetus.¹⁹⁹ In each author, the goal is educational, the content practical, the language simple. Dio Chrysostom, by contrast, declaiming in public and with substantial literary re-working of his orations, is described as possessing "rhetorical

195 As the literary critic Franco Moretti discusses, the goal of "qualitative research" is to provide "a type of data which is ideally independent of interpretations," although he sees as limitation the inability of data-centric approaches to provide interpretation. Indeed, such a qualitative approach as I pursue here is entirely compatible with a vast body of Pauline scholarship that has as its goal the interpretation of his concepts and ideas. See F. Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London, New York: Verso, 2005) 9.

196 See also my introductory remarks in chapter three, when I discuss the subjectivity inherent in selecting my literary criteria inductively and in deciding what constitutes a particular appearance of these criteria.

197 M. Hadas, *A History of Greek Literature* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1950) 226. But note, however, the important counter-example of Columella, who wrote on agricultural subjects in verse.

198 Hadas, *A History of Greek Literature*, 226.

199 Idem, 231–246.

excesses.”²⁰⁰ Form and context seem to parallel. Hadas has the right idea, but lacks specific literary criteria by which to differentiate the works of authors like Dio and Epictetus.

I finish my overview with the work of Albrecht Dihle, though other similar examples in secondary scholarship could be multiplied. Dihle is another author who sees a decline in the stylistic techniques over time and who also sees a chasm between ‘literary prose’ and ‘non-literary prose,’²⁰¹ a distinction which—especially as it is unqualified with respect to specifics—I’ve noted that I find unhelpful when describing texts, much less comparing them. While suggesting a couple of exceptions (Eratosthenes, Posidonius), he concludes that “most Hellenistic scholarly prose can be omitted from the history of literature,”²⁰² a sweepingly bold statement lacking evidence or even basic criteria for judgment. Dihle is typical in his assessment that “[t]he almost total loss to posterity of Hellenistic creative prose was the result of a radical change in literary taste in the second half of the first century BC,”²⁰³ an assessment that privileges the interests of a certain class—the highly trained rhetors²⁰⁴—by assuming it speaks for Greek culture as a whole. As I have noted with regards to other secondary literature above, this approach ignores the evidence of a host of primary sources as well as suffers from methodological shortcomings privileging a certain type of literature.

I’ve saved Dihle until now, however, because he is one of the few classicists whose overview discusses Paul’s letters. The rarity with which Pauline and biblical scholars attempt to speak to the wider Greco-Roman literary landscape is matched only by the rarity with which classicists delve deeply into biblical literature,²⁰⁵ a lamentable state of affairs given the interdisciplinary nature of both fields but one which I suspect has at least partly to do with the desire to respect disciplinary boundaries. On this matter, then, Dihle deserves credit. Yet we find in Dihle’s comments about Paul’s letters an analysis that suffers

200 Idem, 250. Note, however, that Dio’s orations notably vary with respect to their style. This type of conclusion is further evidence for my belief that we should make conclusions about texts instead of authors whenever possible.

201 A. Dihle, *A History of Greek Literature: From Homer to the Hellenistic Period* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994) 282.

202 Idem, 283.

203 Ibid.

204 Idem, 285.

205 Notable exceptions on both sides exist, e.g. David Konstan from classical studies and David E. Aune from biblical studies.

similar shortcomings to what we find in certain Pauline scholarship, as Dihle describes Paul as unique in form and content.²⁰⁶ Even other, older works by classicists, such as the influential Norden who attempts to situate Paul in his literary environment, write in sweepingly broad terms about Paul's style and its relation to contemporary, Greco-Roman literature.²⁰⁷ Many scholars in both biblical studies and classical studies, it seems, re-inscribe certain unhelpful assumptions about literature as well as lack specific literary criteria for describing and comparing texts.

Finally, brief mention must be made of scholars who characterize Paul's writings as 'Jewish literature',²⁰⁸ though I've touched on this issue partly above in my discussion of certain biblical scholarship. First, such categorizations wrongly assume that Jewish literature is a highly coherent category. Like Greek or Roman literature, we find equally tremendous variety in literature penned

206 Dihle, *Greek and Latin Literature*, 204–206. Cf. M. Reiser, among others, discussed in chapter one.

207 E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa: vom VI. Jahrhundert vor Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1983 [1898]). Common to many of these older, theologically-influenced German approaches is the attempt to link a purportedly unique Christian content with a unique permutation of existing literary style. We also find romantic ideas about Christian literature supposedly springing solely from the experience of unique, reified communities and their inspired leaders: S.K. Stowers, "The Concept of "Community" and the History of Early Christianity," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 23 (2011) 238–256.

208 This characterization can occur across a wide continuum. Some scholars argue that Jewish epistolography, for example, is the main influence on Paul's style and letter-form: I. Taatz, *Frühjüdische Briefe: Die paulinische Briefe im Rahmen der offiziellen religiösen Briefe des Frühjudentums* (Göttingen: Vandernhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) esp. 102f.; M. Goulder, "The Pauline Epistles," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (ed. R. Alter and F. Kermode; London: Collins, 1987) esp. 479–480; T. Hegg, *The Letter Writer: Paul's Background and Torah Perspective* (First Fruits of Zion, 2002). Others argue for a more nuanced approach, with the influence of Jewish epistolography present but to a lesser extent than Greco-Roman epistolography, e.g. D.L. Stamps, "A Literary-Rhetorical Reading of the Opening and Closing of 1 Corinthians" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Durham University, 1994). A good introduction to Jewish epistolography can be found in D.J. Pardee, D. Whitehead, and P.E. Dion, "An Overview of Ancient Hebrew Epistolography," *JBL* 97:3 (September 1978) 321–346. I argue, however, that divisions such as 'Jewish versus Greek epistolography', such as we see in Stamps, misses the point: we should look to trends in ancient Mediterranean epistolography that cut across these reified categories, while remaining mindful of differences that can be classified on the basis of criteria such as region, historical period, content, and so forth.

by Jews/Judaeans. Central to my argument about Paul's letters is the fact that certain literary norms encompassing form, content, and social purpose were present across the ancient, Greco-Roman Mediterranean and cut across ethnic and religious affiliations such as Jewish or Judaeans. The reader will recall that the specific *nature* of the content may change, while the *type* of content remains: Philo and Josephus do not write in a literary style different than non-Judaeans, though their choice of content will doubtless vary. As I argue with respect to Paul's letters, for example, his appeals to authority come in similar contexts and are used in similar ways to the appeals to authority in Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*, but Paul's authorities (Judaeans God, Christ, Septuagint) are different from those of Epictetus and Philodemus (gods, Socrates, philosophical texts by their school founders). In chapter four, I will return to this issue, where I discuss likening Paul to certain 'Jewish apocalyptic literature' and analyze that claim from a textual-comparative standpoint using a text from the Dead Sea Scrolls, the *Damascus Document*.

Along these same lines, it is important to speak to how Paul and Paul's letters compare to the two other major, known Judaeans authors of his time, Josephus and Philo. Despite the ethnic-religious, Judaeans affiliation shared by Josephus and Paul, Josephus' two main writings (*Judean Antiquities*; *The Jewish War*) substantially differ from Paul's letters in form, content, and social purpose. Josephus also seems to differ from Paul in terms of his social location, with a more extensive education, higher socio-economic standing, facility with Hebrew and/or Aramaic (*War* 1:3), and closer ties to the Jewish Temple and its environs as opposed to Paul whose letters give no indication (*contra Acts*) that he spent time in or around the Temple, though this last point must remain highly tentative given the tiny amount of biographical information in Paul's letters.

Similar differences can be detailed between Paul, Philo, and their respective writings, though few scholars will propose similarities in style, content, social purpose, and social standing between Paul and Philo and their writings. Few claim, for example, that Philo wrote in a uniquely Jewish style despite his close ties to, and apparently deep knowledge of, the Temple and its surrounding groups and social practices, though many specific elements of his content (e.g., Moses, Temple sacrifice) arise from the importance he ascribes to Judaeans sacred texts. Such elements of content, however, as I posited with Paul, can be framed in broader, more abstract conceptual ways, such as historical narrative, group construction, or general claims about religion and the cosmos. Authors modified and added to certain literary conventions as they saw fit, but for the most part they did not modify the implicit stylistic conventions themselves.

If one were to posit a specifically Jewish type of writing,²⁰⁹ one would need to undertake extensive literary analyses and comparisons as I do in this project and show how the writings of, e.g., Paul, Josephus, and Philo overlap in many and significant ways relative to other Greco-Roman texts.²¹⁰ Though I recognize there is much more that could be said about Paul's Judaeian affiliations (ethnic, cultural, religious, and so forth),²¹¹ I will again simply emphasize that the present study's central goal is to compare texts—specifically their literary form, type of content (rendered in the abstract, e.g. claims about gods), and social purpose (also somewhat abstract, e.g. group construction)—and not to treat questions such as Paul's identity or the specific meaning of his content.

Ancient Mediterranean Comparanda: Authors and Texts

A few conclusions are in order. First, as I have emphasized with regard to both Paul's letters and contemporary Greco-Roman literature, the secondary scholarship has often upheld a high/low rhetorical dualism that is invalidated not only by its inherent theoretical shortcomings but more importantly by the existing primary sources. Second, how to characterize Paul is the subject of wide confusion, with scholars placing his letters all over the literary/linguistic map, with many concluding that his content and style are simply unique. Third, some classicists have intriguingly suggested examples of ancient authors whose writings do not seem to conform to the traditional high/low rhetorical dualism and whose works consequently merit further study for any comparison of Paul in his broader socio-literary milieu: Arrian,²¹² Epictetus,²¹³

209 Studies that investigate the influence of different languages on one another, by contrast, have strong potential: they do not posit 'Jewish' or 'Greek' ways of thinking or writing, but rather make empirical, linguistic arguments. Given the wide range of languages and dialects spoken across the ancient Mediterranean, often in fairly close proximity, I am sympathetic to this line of argument.

210 Some related work has been done here, e.g. J. Redondo, "The Greek Literary Language of the Hebrew Historian Josephus," *Hermes* 128.4 (2000) 420–434.

211 In my final chapter I return to the issues of religious-specific knowledge and whether or not there were Judaeian/Torah-specific centers of education present in Paul's time and environs.

212 P.A. Brunt, *Arrian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976–1983); E.I. Robson, *Arrian* (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966); P.A. Stadter, *Arrian of Nicomedia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

213 A. Bonhöffer, *Epiktet und das Neue Testament* (Gieszen, 1911); N. White, *Handbook of Epictetus* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1983); A.A. Long, *Epictetus*.

Dexippus, Dio Chrysostom,²¹⁴ Eratosthenes,²¹⁵ Josephus,²¹⁶ Pausanias,²¹⁷

A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); K. Seddon, *Epictetus' Handbook and the Tablet of Cebes: Guides to Stoic Living* (London, New York: Routledge, 2005). Further works can be found in my bibliography.

- 214 Hadas, *A History of Greek Literature*, 250; J.W. Cohoon and H.L. Crosby, *Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: W. Heinemann, 1961–1985); P.A. Brunt, *Studies in Greek History and Thought* (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press, 1993); J. Grethlein and A. Rengakos, *Narratology and Interpretation: The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2009); C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); R.A. Kugler, *Representations of Self and Audience in the Phrygian and Cilician Orations of Dio Chrysostom* (Ph.D. Dissertation: Brown University, 1999). For moral-paraenetic content see further T. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul in his Hellenistic Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); see also G. Mussies, *Dio Chrysostom and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1972).
- 215 D.W. Roller, *Eratosthenes' Geography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); G. Klaus, *Eratosthenes von Kyrene: Studien zur hellenistischen Kultur- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (München: C.H. Beck, 2002); E.P. Wolfer, *Eratosthenes von Kyrene als Mathematiker und Philosoph* (Groningen: Noordhoff, 1954); G.-A. Keller, *Eratosthenes und die alexandrinische Sterndichtung* (Zürich: Leemann, 1946).
- 216 T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (2nd ed.; London: Duckworth, 2002); S. Mason, ed., *Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000); J. Pastor, P. Stern, and M. Mor, eds., *Flavius Josephus: Interpretation and History* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011); L.H. Feldman and J.R. Levison, eds., *Josephus' Contra Apionem: Studies in its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1996); R. Weber, *Das „Gesetz“ bei Philon von Alexandrien und Flavius Josephus: Studien zum Verständnis und zur Funktion der Thora bei den beiden Hauptzeugen des hellenistischen Judentums* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2001); S. Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003); C. Böttrich, J. Herzer, and T. Reiprich, eds., *Josephus und das Neue Testament: wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen. II. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaico-Hellenisticum, 25.-28. Mai 2006, Greifswald* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); J.D.H. Norton, *Contours in the Text: Textual Variation in the Writings of Paul, Josephus, and the Yahad* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2011).
- 217 O. Strid, *Über Sprache und Stil des Periegeten Pausanias* (Uppsala: Universitet; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1976); C. Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); S.A. Alcock, J.F. Cherry, and J. Elsner, eds., *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Ancient Greece* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); D. Knoepfler and M. Piérart, eds., *Editer, traduire, commenter Pausanias en l'an 2000: Actes du colloque de Neuchâtel et de Fribourg, 18–22 septembre 1998, autour des deux éditions en cours de la Périégèse, collection des universités de France, fondazione Lorenzo Valla* (Neuchâtel: Université de Neuchâtel, 2001).

Philodemus,²¹⁸ Pliny the Elder and Younger,²¹⁹ Plutarch,²²⁰ Posidonius,²²¹

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- 218 M. Gigante, *Philodemus in Italy: The Books from Herculaneum* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995); C. Chandler, *Philodemus On Rhetoric. Books 1 and 2: Translation and Exegetical Essays* (New York: Routledge, 2006); N.A. Greenberg, *The Poetic Thought of Philodemus* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990); R. Janko, ed., *On poems* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); D. Konstan, ed., *On Frank Criticism* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998); D. Obbink, ed., *Philodemus On Piety* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); D. Sider, *The Epigrams of Philodemus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); J.T. Fitzgerald, D. Obbink, and G.S. Holland, eds., *Philodemus and the New Testament World* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004); C.E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (Leiden, New York: E.J. Brill, 1995); see also Rose's assessment, *A Handbook of Greek Literature*, 410. Further works can be found in my bibliography.
- 219 I think specifically of Dihle's comments, *Greek and Latin Literature*, 184–185, but repeated with even less specificity in the following: J. Bostock and H.T. Riley, *The Natural History of Pliny* (London: H.G. Bohn, 1855–1857); F.H. Dewey, *The Letters by Pliny the Younger* (New York: The Translation publishing company, 1925); T.M. Murphy, *Pliny the Elder's Natural History: The Empire in the Encyclopedia* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); H. Rackham, *Pliny: Natural History* (London; W. Heinemann, Ltd.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938); P.G. Walsh, *Complete Letters* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); J.F. Healy, *Pliny the Elder on Science and Technology* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); F. Gamberini, *Stylistic Theory and Practice in the Younger Pliny* (Hildesheim, New York: Olms, 1983); M.H. Ritchie, *Study of Conditional and Temporal Clauses in Pliny the Younger* (Philadelphia, 1902).
- 220 H.D. Betz, ed., *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Betz, ed., *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1975); F.C. Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: W. Heinemann, 1967–1984); B.P. Hillyard, *Plutarch, De Audiendo: A Text and Commentary* (Salem, NH: Ayer, 1988); R. Lamberton, *Plutarch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); B. Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: W. Heinemann, 1968–1984); P.A. Stadter, *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992); A. Strobach, *Plutarch und die Sprachen: ein Beitrag zur Fremdsprachenproblematik in der Antike* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1997); P. Wälchli, *Studien zu den literarischen Beziehungen zwischen Plutarch und Lukian* (München: K.G. Saur, 2003). Dihle, *Greek and Latin Literature*, gives a lengthy analysis of Plutarch's language, writing that Plutarch evinced some qualities of classicizing prose (e.g., avoiding hiatus) while avoiding others (e.g., balanced sentences and clauses), 189f. Most recently with respect to philosophical ethics, see G. Roskam and L.V.d. Stockt, eds. *Virtues for the People: Aspects of Plutarchan Ethics. Plutarchea hypomnemata* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2011).
- 221 Hadas, *A History of Greek Literature*, 231; G. Pfligersdorffer, *Studien zu Poseidonios* (Wien: R.M. Rohrer, 1959); W. Theiler, *Poseidonios: Die Fragmente* (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1982); L. Edelstein and I.G. Kidd, *Posidonius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

Ptolemy,²²² Seneca,²²³ and Strabo.²²⁴ While some of these authors (Epictetus, Philodemus) prove more productive than others (Dexippus, Eratosthenes) in comparison with Paul due to closer similarities in their texts' content, style, and social purpose, it behooves us to keep open these other authors as avenues of potential research. I will return to discuss some of these authors (Epictetus, Dio, Josephus, Philodemus, Pliny the Younger, and Seneca), in varying degrees, later in this study.

In my study I have chosen to focus in on a few specific works by these authors (Epictetus' *Discourses*; Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*) that have significant similarities with Paul's letters in literary form, social purpose and conceptual elements of content (ethics, group formation, authorial authority, and wider cosmological claims), and authorial social location, all of which are similarities that I describe as central to defining Paul's socio-literary sphere. This is not to say that a comparison with other of these authors' works would not be productive. Indeed, inherent in my attempt to provide transparent, testable criteria and an empirical approach for comparison is the desire for my account to be further expanded or corrected by including additional data.

1972, 1989); R. Liechtenhan, *Die göttliche Vorherbestimmung bei Paulus und in der posidonianischen Philosophie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922).

222 Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Literature*, 381–382; J.L. Berggren, *Ptolemy's Geography: An Annotated Translation of the Theoretical Chapters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); F.E. Robbins, *Tetrabiblos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940, 1980); J. Solomon, *Harmonics* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000); G.J. Toomer, *Ptolemy's Almagest* (London: Duckworth, 1984).

223 Dihle, *Greek and Latin Literature*, 89f.; J.N. Sevenster, *Paul and Seneca* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1961); H.V. Canter, *Rhetorical Elements in the Tragedies of Seneca* (Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1925); W.L. Chafe, *Seneca Morphology and Dictionary* (Washington: Smithsonian Press, 1967); C.D.N. Costa, ed. *Seneca* (London, Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1974); L. Delatte, *Lucius Annaeus Seneca, opera philosophica, index verborum: listes de fréquence, relevés grammaticaux* (Hildesheim, New York: G. Olms, 1981); J. Dingel, *Seneca und die Dichtung* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1974); G.O. Hutchinson, *Latin Literature from Seneca to Juvenal: A Critical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); A.L. Motto, *Seneca, Moral Epistles* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985); Motto, *Seneca: A Critical Bibliography, 1900–1980: Scholarship on his Life, Thought, Prose, and Influence* (Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert, 1989); Motto, *Essays on Seneca* (Frankfurt, New York: Peter Lang, 1993); Motto, *Further Essays on Seneca* (Frankfurt, New York: Peter Lang, 2001); K. Volk and G.D. Williams, *Seeing Seneca Whole: Perspectives on Philosophy, Poetry, and Politics* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006).

224 Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Literature*, 382; Hadas, *A History of Greek Literature*, 233; H.L. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo* (London: W. Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968–1983).

In this study I have merely chosen to focus in on these particular works as I believe they contain the closest overlaps with Paul's letters in matters of content, form, and social purpose relative to other kinds of works (e.g., historical or geographical works by Strabo, Pausanias, Posidonius, and Josephus). Furthermore, the authors of these particular works that share Paul's sphere (Epictetus, Philodemus) seem to have more, and more significant, similarities with Paul in terms of education, social purpose, and social location relative to other of these authors (e.g., Josephus, Dio Chrysostom²²⁵). Further study on texts and authors outside of this specific study would doubtless further flesh out and improve the overall taxonomy, as the present work primarily concerns only one socio-literary sphere.

225 Though Dio does show a wide range in his style, typical of someone with an advanced rhetorical education, and seemingly similar to Philodemus in this regard. Dio's works, particularly those with an ethical-moral paraenetic content, are thus prime subjects for a closer literary comparison with Paul's letters and other texts in that sphere. Though Dio is generally less keen on making statements about religion, the gods, and humanity than people like Paul and Philodemus, such comparisons are nonetheless worthwhile. His *Oration* 12, however, specifically concerns the gods, and thus is a natural subject for further comparison with the texts in Paul's sphere. *Orations* 14 and 15, meanwhile, concern slavery and freedom, ethical concerns tied to abstract concepts of virtue with conceptual parallels to texts in Paul's sphere, and thus also seem natural comparanda. As I discuss in chapters four and five, however, and as shown in my appendices, despite some similarities, even Dio's orations with conceptual parallels are notably less similar to Paul's letters than Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Death* and *On Piety*.

Rethinking Paul and Paul's Letters: Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus in Context

A Brief Introduction to Epictetus and Philodemus

Epictetus' life has many similarities with Paul's life, though our evidence for both is quite limited.¹ Epictetus was born somewhere around the middle of the first century in the eastern Mediterranean city of Hierapolis in modern-day southwest Turkey. He made his way to Rome, where as a slave to a wealthy freedman he studied under the well-regarded Musonius Rufus. As with Paul, we do not know the story of his early education, but it is likely he was educated in reading and writing previous to his exposure to philosophy. After a period of philosophical study with Musonius Rufus, Epictetus left Rome, perhaps under duress, and traveled the ancient Mediterranean to Nicopolis, a major city on the western coast of Greece.² There he practiced philosophy and taught students until his death sometime in the first half of the second century, gaining a reputation and disciples such as Arrian, who compiled the *Discourses* seemingly from lecture notes.³ Epictetus thus shares with Paul historical period, general

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- 1 Epictetus biography is compiled from comments internal to the *Discourses* as well as occasional comments in later works, such as in Origen, Simplicius, Suetonius, Aelius Gellius, Lucian, and Photius. The general account I've provided here is in line with the basic consensus found in encyclopedia entries and introductions to editions of Epictetus' works (e.g., Schenkel, Long, etc.), though Epictetus' education previous to his tutelage under Musonius Rufus is a site of only plausible speculation. For a good discussion, see M. Spanneut, "Epikur," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 5 (1962) 599–681. This study's proposal for Paul's likely education in chapter five is also, I think, suggestive for Epictetus' own training, which I think took place within a semi-formal setting, focusing on writing and reading increasingly complex material, stemming possibly from a bureaucratic need and expanding with time, interest, and capability to more complex philosophical/religious study with Musonius Rufus which he then later re-deployed and adapted for his own purposes, such as gaining followers based on this specialized knowledge and ethical adherence to certain principles derived from cosmological understandings.
 - 2 Cf. *Titus* 3.12.
 - 3 H. Selle, "Dichtung oder Wahrheit – Der Autor der Epiktetischen Predigten," *Philologus* 145 (2001) 269–290; see also the introduction in H. Schenkel, ed., *Epicteti Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae* (Lipset: Teubner, 1894), and discussion in A.A. Long, *Epictetus. A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002) esp. 38–41, who argues that "there are numerous

region, apparent education in reading and writing that could have been formal or informal but doesn't seem to have been of the advanced rhetorical kind we see advocated by someone like Quintilian, acquisition of specialized advanced knowledge (Epictetus: Stoic texts, especially those of Chrysippus and Zeno of Elea; Paul: Septuagint) in a formal or semi-formal setting, and a behavior and social purpose that involved gaining disciples and teaching them about the cosmos, the gods, ethics, and group formation in a way that foregrounded their personal authority as both highly knowledgeable and ethically imitable.

Epictetus' *Discourses* is a lengthy text written by his student Arrian, and relates Epictetus' teachings, mostly concerned with human behavior within his general Stoic conceptual and cosmological framework. Though we must retain some skepticism about Arrian's introductory claims to accuracy, in the present study I will speak of Epictetus' *Discourses* instead of Arrian's *Discourses* due to the fact that I believe that Arrian's text is in fact generally faithful to Epictetus' form and content, a position in line with general scholarly opinion though there is not complete consensus.⁴ This necessarily raises the question of whether transcribed oral teachings can be usefully compared with other texts that did not begin as speech. Yet as I will show in chapter four, the *Discourses* in fact closely overlaps with Paul's letters and certain works by Philodemus on matters of style.

These overlaps suggest several things: that certain conventions of form, content, and social purpose straddled the oral and textual realm;⁵ that perhaps oral presentations found their genesis in written form and/or they were inherently close to their textual equivalent;⁶ and/or that Arrian, himself a highly

reasons, internal to the text, for taking the gist of his record to be completely authentic to Epictetus' own style and language," including vocabulary, themes within the content, a comparison with Arrian's other works, and the fact that "[b]y the time this collection of the discourses was in general circulation, Epictetus himself had achieved an eminence that would have immediately exposed any significant fabrication by Arrian," 41.

- 4 Editors of the *Discourses* and Epictetus' thought tend to conclude that Arrian is generally faithful, e.g. Long, Oldfather, and Dobbin. Most bibliography on Epictetus, as with Philodemus, is concerned with his thought instead of his social location, e.g. Spanneut's bibliography in the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 678–681; see also previous note, specifically the accounts of Schenkel and Long.
- 5 Recall my definition of socio-literary spheres that involved types of texts with particular social goals. As I discussed with respect to John Searle, a text's contextual entailments can be both on the level of discourse and on the level of social action. Context, after all, is by definition comprised of many facets.
- 6 Note, for example, the huge body of evidence we have for speeches composed first in written form or that later made their way into textual form in figures like Cicero. This was apparently

educated figure, was also subject to the same wider, shared, implicit literary conventions pertaining to a particular intersection of form, content, and social purpose, a point to which I will return in the next chapter.⁷ We should also take seriously Stowers' argument that both Epictetus/Arrian and Paul are, at least to some extent, cultivating a conversational, dialogical, and semi-colloquial style intentionally in order to forward their particular social aims.⁸ In this line of thought, public speeches and letters are rhetorical or literary in their own way, not reflecting speech and simply functioning as one side of a conversation.⁹ I will return to this issue again at the end of this chapter as well as at the end of chapter five where I discuss parallels between letters and Epictetus' and Philodemus' conversational philosophy at the conceptual and abstract-formal level.

Philodemus' life, meanwhile, also has some notable similarities with Epictetus and Paul. Like Epictetus and Paul, what biographical information we have comes from material internal to Philodemus' works and later authors,¹⁰ and what follows here reflects the general, tentative consensus. Born around the end of the second century BCE, Philodemus precedes Paul and Epictetus by roughly a century and a half. He was born in the town of Gadara in Roman Syria, in what is present-day Jordan. He traveled the ancient Mediterranean and acquired advanced training in Epicureanism from the eminent philosopher Zeno of Sidon in Athens before settling in Rome, probably under the patron Piso who was placed at the highest levels of Roman aristocracy.

a common practice for orators, who would then polish their speeches up for publication and literary dissemination. That Arrian claims to have not given the text substantial polish—a claim that I think is supported by the non-prefaced conversational introductions—seems to indicate that Epictetus' teachings were in fact given fairly straightforward treatment by Arrian when composing the *Discourses*.

7 Arrian's other two extant works, the *Anabasis of Alexander* and the *Indica*, contain a different style from the *Discourses*, indicating that Arrian's other works also reflect a fundamental intersection of form, content, and literary purpose, though of a different kind. This is also yet another example of a highly educated author who can write in different styles based on the content and compositional context of a given work. A particular literary sphere, in other words, is most of all based on types of text (form, content, purpose), but things like minimum education of author and their social location that stimulated particular social aims for their texts are also important constituents.

8 S.K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

9 This view of letters can be found in Seneca's epistles (6.5–6; 40.1; 75.1–7), and is succinctly treated by Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 12–14.

10 E.g., Strabo, Meleagros, the *Suda*, and scattered references elsewhere.

Philodemus differs from Epictetus and Paul, then, in likely possessing an advanced rhetorical education and a higher social status, never being subjected to slavery and certainly connected with some of the upper reaches of Roman society. Compared to Epictetus and Paul, Philodemus' literary output is vast and varied, reflecting his advanced education as well as possibly also his life of textual leisure under Piso's patronage. Nevertheless, he seems not to have partaken in the speaking circuit or political arena like many other highly educated aristocrats, due perhaps to the traditional (if inconsistently applied) Epicurean (and wider Greco-Roman philosophical) antipathy toward aristocratic, advanced education, especially regarding areas such as rhetoric, politics, and judicial matters.¹¹ Philodemus also seems to have required a patron to facilitate his literary output, further evidence that he was no significant participant in the aristocratic, advanced rhetorical sphere. His overall social program, furthermore, seems to generally parallel what we find in Epictetus and Paul: the acquisition of specialized knowledge about the cosmos and ethics; disputation with other such specialists; framing his audience in terms of groupness around his claims; and attempts to foreground his authority based on his specialized knowledge and imitable ethical adherence to his cosmological framework.

Most of Philodemus' extant works were found in the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, preserved in heated mud and lava from the same volcano that buried Pompeii. In what may have been Philodemus' personal library, scholars have been able to recover many texts from the roughly 1800 papyri, ranging in subject matter and including such texts as *On Piety*, *On Death*, *On Rhetoric*, *On Poems*, *On Household Management*, and *On Frank Speech*. As befitting an active thinker and text-producer, these texts seem to be in different states of completeness, giving us a window into text production, editing, and copying. Suffice to say, recent insights derived from the Herculaneum papyri have been tremendous, and much more work remains to be done.

Both Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death* seem to be completed, fully-polished texts, though we cannot be sure, and in form, content, and social purpose they line up quite closely with Paul's letters and Epictetus' *Discourses*. My appendices contain the relative densities of my literary criteria in each text, showing that these two particular texts map more closely onto Paul's letters and Epictetus' *Discourses* than other of Philodemus' texts or other texts outside this sphere. Like Paul's letters and Epictetus' *Discourses*, *On Piety* and

11 Philodemus' specific attitudes can be found in *On Rhetoric* and *On Poetry*, which reflect his innovations on this traditional Epicurean position by arguing for the validity of certain types of rhetoric and poetry.

On Death have as content cosmological claims, such as about the gods, and ethical advice tied to their broader cosmological framework as well as the author's personal example.

As far as social purpose, I believe that each of these texts, despite some differences, have other significant similarities: an interest in being easily understood by a wide audience via a relatively plain-spoken delivery and use of simple rhetorical devices such as examples and metaphors; an interest in passing on beliefs in their wider, abstract cosmological-religious claims; staking rival claims in an ongoing, dialogic social setting competitive on the basis of both these abstract claims and the attraction and retaining of followers; an interest in influencing behavior, particularly within the context of their wider cosmological-religious claims; constructing groupness in their audience around both this belief and behavior; and asserting authority vis-à-vis their audience based on their specialized knowledge and imitable ethical example, often in contradistinction to rival claimants.

Other of Philodemus' texts, such as *On Rhetoric* and *On Poetry* by comparative contrast, lack these elements of content, and we also see a notable divergence in form, suggesting that these other Philodemian works do not belong in the same sphere. Similarly, the social purpose of such works seems not to concern belief, behavior, and group construction, all of which buttress the author's authority based on their knowledge and imitable example, though surely there is an implied claim for authority based on the authoritative nature of the text and the fact that it is a text at all. Other of Philodemus' texts also differ from that particular intersection of form, content, and social purpose while still containing some similarities. *On Frank Speech*, for example, seems almost like a handbook in form, with ethical content and social purpose, but with ethical content that is only obliquely derived from Epicurean cosmological understandings. *On Household Management*, meanwhile, narrows its groupness and ethics to philosophers, asking how they should support themselves financially, a clear conceptual parallel with parts of Paul's own thought (e.g., 1 Cor 9).

I will return to intersections of form, content, and social purpose in the chapter three, where I will justify, detail, and explain the reasons for their fundamental interrelation. I will also touch on the issue of social location and how it underpins matters of textual form, content, and social purpose. In chapter five, I will focus on the question of social location and discuss its constituent elements such as education and literary production. As we will see, authors needed only to share a minimum of education to write within a certain sphere, and a general social location could facilitate the production of a variety of kinds of texts.

Textual Analysis and Comparison

Given the extensive detail necessitated by an in-depth textual comparison as I undertake in chapter four, there is simply not space for a textual comparison of all potentially fruitful texts and authors, such as I have suggested above additionally to Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*. I firmly believe that any wider theorization and classification of literature must rest on specific textual work, and for now I can only provide that for a few specific texts. I have, however, included some additional works by these two thinkers (Epictetus' *Enchiridion*; Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* and *On Household Management*) as well as other authors (Seneca, Pliny the Younger, Dio Chrysostom) in my appendices and website to show by comparison how their literary form maps onto the works in Paul's sphere. I have also indicated, throughout my argument above, other potential authors or texts that might supplement or modify my theorized socio-literary spheres. At the end of chapter five, I also return to several texts and authors particularly relevant to my overall, comparative project.

The *Enchiridion* of *Epictetus*, an ethical manual compiled by Arrian and derived from the *Discourses*, shows an interesting intersection of form, content, and social purpose. We see some similarities with the *Discourses* in content as well as form, such as the predominant concern with exhortation, proper behavior, the use of examples, and the construction of groupness around broadly defined virtuous action. Yet whereas the *Discourses* used conversation and rhetorical questions to argue dialogically (with both his audience and imaginary interlocutors)¹² and to foreground the authoritative role of the author, the *Enchiridion* significantly differs on these points. The two documents unsurprisingly have many significant overlaps, but also have some notable differences in form, content, and social purpose, reflecting the difference between what are essentially polished lecture notes from Epictetus' classroom and an edited-down ethical manual. A comparison between these two documents is instructive for how modifying a text for a different social purpose results in the persistence of some characteristics but a change in others.

I included several works by Philodemus that broach different types of content and have a different social purpose from what we see in *On Piety* and *On Death*, which were concerned with ethics, cosmology, and Philodemus as authoritative teacher. The reader will note that these other Philodemian works, which do not share a similar content or social purpose, also diverge in form from the works in Paul's sphere. These other works are more concerned

12 B. Wehner, *Die Funktion der Dialogstruktur in Epiktets Diatriben* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000).

with the specific nature and role of other kinds of speech and rhetoric, not questions of cosmology, ethics, and groupness that we see in *On Piety*, *On Death*, Epictetus' *Discourses*, and Paul's letters. Interestingly, *On Rhetoric* and *On Poetry*, two treatises whose more technical content closely overlaps, are in form (note, e.g., the disproportionately large amount of analyses of questions/objections and systematic structure) quite close to one another but different in several notable ways from *On Frank Speech*, whose handbook-like focus on ethical content and social purpose (relating to behavior in a given group) apart from discussion of the gods or cosmology finds some parallels in form with texts in Paul's sphere (e.g., groupness) as well as in form and content with Epictetus' *Enchiridion*.

A comparison of different Philodemean works with a different content and social purpose is a useful demonstration both of how highly educated authors could write in styles other than classicizing, rhetorical treatises,¹³ and of how different types of content and social purpose are fundamentally tied to different types of literary style. We might even think of this in reverse: if Paul or Epictetus attempted to pen a classicizing declamation, likely they would fall short of Philodemus' own effort (Paul and Epictetus seem to have less formal, advanced educations than Philodemus), but they would doubtless attempt to integrate certain classicizing-rhetorical tropes commonly known and heard in their wider social and literary environment. Form, content, and social purpose continue to generally line up, but they are limited by such things as education and the author's particular social location. In other words, Paul and Epictetus would probably not even attempt a public declamation such as those undertaken by Dio Chrysostom (contra *Acts*) due to Paul's and Epictetus' specific education, social location, and general goals (i.e., social purpose) that differed from Dio.

Meanwhile, Seneca's *Moral Epistles*, penned in Latin, seems to have a type of moral-paraenetic content and social purpose shared with works such as Epictetus' *Discourses* and certain of Paul's letters, and they tellingly show a general overlap of form with the works in Paul's sphere. This in turn suggests that these broader literary conventions that I posit for the ancient Mediterranean can cross even linguistic boundaries. I will return to these issues in my final chapter with some comments on general socio-literary conventions that seem to influence composition across geographical and linguistic boundaries,

13 Many historical and geographic works, for example, were written by those with a highly advanced rhetorical education. Given the specific content and social purpose of these works, however, we see corresponding differences in form from what we would expect in a classicizing oration.

especially where common knowledge of more than one language exists.¹⁴ All told, it seems probable that highly educated writers knowing both Greek and Latin would be more likely to deploy conventions from the Greek language than those knowing only Latin, for instance.

Social Location: Paul, Philodemus, and Epictetus

There is no consensus in Pauline scholarship about Paul's social location.¹⁵ Two immediate points here can usefully frame subsequent discussion. My first point concerns how I approach socio-historical matters based on my analysis of Paul's letters and other contemporary texts. The present study focuses on what an analysis and comparison of Paul's texts with certain other texts can suggest about Paul and his social position. My approach neither seeks nor purports to describe the social location of Paul's audience, be it his explicit, implied, or expected audience. This departs somewhat from scholars such as Malherbe who believe that Paul's letters not only provide evidence about Paul

14 The literature on ancient bi- and multi-lingualism has come to little consensus, though most classicists seem to think that it was fairly common, especially in large urban areas with many different groups of people, a position with clear modern analogies. See discussion in, e.g., Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 176f., and Bagnall, *Everyday Writing*, 142–143, who both argue persuasively based on a host of evidence from both urban and rural areas that knowledge of more than one language was likely common in many parts of the ancient Mediterranean. For an example of scholarship treating linguistic overlap and syntactical and stylistic interference between Greek and other languages in the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean, see Bubenik, *Sociolinguistic Area*, esp. 64f. For an introduction to the subject of ancient multilingualism with good bibliography and reference to modern findings on multilingualism, see A. Mullen and P. James, eds., *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

15 One of many possible starting points: R.F. Hock, "The Problem of Paul's Social Class: Further Reflections," in *Paul's World* (ed. S.E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2008). Hock here expands on his earlier article, "Paul's Tentmaking and the Problem of His Social Class," *JBL* 97 (1978) 555–564, where he argued that Paul's status was equivalent to that of an aristocrat, an argument and conclusion that he largely reproduces in his later article but in a more nuanced way that addresses certain critiques of his earlier article. For a response to Hock, see T.D. Still, "Did Paul Loathe Manual Labor? Revisiting the Work of Ronald F. Hock on the Apostle's Tentmaking and Social Class," *JBL* 125 (2006) 781–795. Scholars have variously concluded that Paul was essentially an aristocrat, or that he personified the subsistence-living, lower-class existence. As I've argued above, how scholars view Paul's status is often closely tied to how they view his letters, their message, and audience.

but are also “valuable sources for learning about the churches”¹⁶ and other sociological phenomena such as the education or status of “most of [Paul’s] converts.”¹⁷ I do not deny that Paul’s letters can speak to more than just Paul and his social location; I am simply very hesitant to come to these types of broader socio-historical conclusions such as about the form, or even presence, of things like so-called house churches or generalizations about the education, wealth, and class of those most sympathetic to Paul’s message and activities.¹⁸

Framing Paul’s social location, of course, makes reference to wider social groupings, such as my socio-literary spheres though these are not exactly distinct social groups per se, which we can demarcate or describe based on certain social criteria, such as wealth, education, ethnicity, religion, and so forth.¹⁹ Yet crucial to my approach is the emphasis on an individual producing a document instead of a community producing a document.²⁰ The communitarian understanding of textual production has been more prevalent in studies of the gospels than in Pauline studies, but it is nonetheless frequently detectable in studies that seek to reconstruct entire communities, for example ‘the Corinthian Christians’ or even ‘the Corinthians’ more broadly, based on the

16 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 34.

17 Idem, 56. We find a similar concern widely in Pauline scholarship. For an influential discussion, see Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 51f.

18 I nonetheless find persuasive the accounts of certain scholars who argued that early Pauline sympathizers were not distinctly lower class (so Deissmann) or upper class (so Judge, though he includes the role of dependents) but rather was a heterogeneous mix that generally reflected both the population as a whole and the heterogeneity inherent in any large household that contained a wide stratification in its members. A few early proponents of this view: Abraham Malherbe, Wayne Meeks, Floyd Filson, Werner Eck, Robert Grant, and Gerd Theissen. Although some of these accounts also fall into the reductive dichotomy of ‘high class versus low class’, these scholars deserve much credit for their specificity in delineating the specific types of people they had in mind for early Christian converts, e.g. categories such as ‘urban artisans’ or ‘heads of households with Jewish sympathies,’ a specificity that allows us to think of where these particular types of people stood in society as determined by a host of status criteria.

19 For an example of using one of these criteria to find Paul’s social status, see J.H. Neyrey, “The Social Location of Paul: Education as the Key,” in *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins* (ed. D. Gowler, G. Bloomquist, and D. Watson; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003) 126–164. The weight in my own account given to education and types of textual production reflects my sympathies with Neyrey’s approach.

20 For a recent response to communitarian understandings of Biblical-textual production, see S.K. Stowers, “The Concept of “Community” and the History of Early Christianity,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 23 (2011) 238–256.

internal evidence of Paul's letters. Paul obviously was responding to contextual matters in parts of his letters, but this does not, in my mind, justify reading into things like the explicit needs of Paul's audience or the specifics of his alleged opponents via mirror reading.

My second major point is that the phrase "social location" is vague and notoriously complex. It is often used without consideration of its referents, seemingly relying on our implicit, modern understanding of status and its constituent elements. Studies on Paul and early Christianity that speak of the 'high status' or 'low status' of the New Testament authors or their audience largely fall into this modernist trap. While I have no qualms with using "status" and "social location" as second-order categories—provided of course that their second-order status is made explicit and defined—it is crucial to note that the status or social location (henceforth, just "status") are determined by not one but a host of factors, and furthermore that these factors differ in kind in different places and times.

Status is also determined by not only a wide variety of constituent parts but also the relative weights of these different parts. This weighting, in turn, often differs between different cultures and times even though the parts may be the same: wealth, for example, may contribute more to status in modern, Western society than it did in a rural Greek farming town of the first century, though it doubtless played an important role in both. Wayne Meeks, whose work closely informs my above and subsequent comments on status,²¹ introduces these very questions into the study of early Christian groups by differentiating between objective, accorded, and subjective status.²² Objective status is what we, as scholars, determine to be the aggregate of constituent and differently-

21 Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, esp. 53f. Meeks draws from several works in particular that inform his approach and conclusions: M.I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Sather Classical Lectures 43; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1974); N. Barber, "Introduction to 'Social Stratification,'" *IESS* 15 (1968) 288–296. Though somewhat dated, they are nonetheless quite productive for framing the problem and proposing a way forward. For a couple recent treatments of status from a sociological perspective, with useful introductions to the issue and bibliography, see D.B. Grusky, ed., *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* (3rd ed.; Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2008), and P. Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993) esp. 44–96.

22 Here Meeks draws specifically from S.M. Lipset, "Social Class," *IESS* 15 (1968) 296–316, and A. Malewski, "The Degree of Status Incongruence and its Effects," in *Class, Status, and Power: Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective* (ed. R. Bendix and S.M. Lipset; 2nd ed.; New York: Free Press; London: Macmillan, 1966) 303–308.

weighted factors that comprise status in a particular social context. Accorded status is what a particular person or group is granted by another particular person or group in their own time and environment. And subjective status is what a particular person or group judges their own status to be. It is thus important to recognize that there are different viewpoints for determining status. Obviously overlaps will occur among these different perspectives, but we must nonetheless remain clear about how we are defining status, its constituent elements, the weight given to these constituent elements, and the particular perspective from which status is understood. In what follows, I will attempt to paint a picture of Paul's likely objective status, taking note of where different perspectives influence this picture.

The fact that different perspectives are brought to bear on status, despite common overlaps, often results in disjunctions, what Meeks influentially termed "status inconsistency."²³ The leader of a particular group might have tremendous status accorded by members of that group, but someone else who stands outside of that group and who views that group contemptuously will probably afford little status to that group's leaders. Substantial overlaps in status judgments, meanwhile, either between different perspectives or between different constituent elements of status, result in what Meeks terms "status consistency, status congruence, or status crystallization."²⁴ This means that if many indicators point to, say, a high status, someone will be more likely to be afforded high status in other spheres or by other people,²⁵ and this someone will also likely give less attention to the status judgments of those whose opinions differ from this crystallized status.²⁶ There are, of course, exceptions, as certain people or groups weight certain status elements disproportionately

23 Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 54. For the relationship between status inconsistency and religion, Meeks points to the work of M.S. Sasaki, "Status Inconsistency and Religious Commitment," in *The Religious Dimension: New Directions in Quantitative Research* (ed. Robert Wuthnow; New York; San Francisco; London: Academic, 1979) 135–156. See also H.M. Blalock, Jr., "Status Inconsistency, Social Mobility, Status Integration, and Structural Effects," *ASR* 32 (1967) 790–801, and M. Dogan, "From Social Class and Religious Identity to Status Incongruence in Post-Industrial Societies," *Comparative Sociology* 3.2 (2004) 163–197.

24 Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 54.

25 E.g., an aristocratic social circle might ignore a non-noble birth if all the other trappings of aristocracy are present, such as wealth, education, and so forth.

26 E.g., if someone is accorded a high status by a large number of social indicators and subjective judgments, they will be more likely to ignore someone who censures them for an alleged lack of status.

relative to the rest of society, or certain people or groups might be disinterested in traditional status indicators like wealth or birth.²⁷

The many variables and allowances for exceptions in the above account serve to highlight the deep complexities inherent in a concept like status. Yet despite these many complexities we can still identify a range of factors that centrally contribute to status in Paul's time. I again take as starting point the suggestions of Meeks for Roman Christians: "such categories as ethnic origins, *ordo*, citizenship, personal liberty, wealthy, occupation, age, sex, and public offices or honors."²⁸ As I mentioned above, we must also consider "the context within which each of these rankings is valid."²⁹ And finally, it is important to recognize that some groups had greater social mobility, in other words the ability to change their status, than others. Those with greatest social mobility in Paul's time seem to have been slaves in aristocratic households and freedmen, particularly those with specialized skills, be it in the realm of craft (e.g., building, such as carpentry), knowledge (e.g., agriculture, such as irrigation), or training (e.g., education, such as epistolography).³⁰

Defining Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus is straightforward on the basis of some criteria but more speculative on the basis of others. For Paul we have a fairly extensive picture based on the evidence of his letters, not taking into account *Acts* which seems to substantially post-date Paul and is furthermore not a reliable historical source. Paul claimed Judaeon ethnicity by birth, affiliation, and religious practice (Phil 3:5 for birth; Gal 1:13–14 and Phil 3:6 for his affiliation and practice in persecuting Christ-sympathizers); he doesn't seem to have possessed any civic office nor does he give any indication of Roman citizenship (contrary to the account in *Acts*); he enjoys freedom of movement, occupation, and habitation over a wide geographic area due to a seemingly large, far-flung, and sympathetic social network,³¹ although he also claims

27 The concept of disinterestedness comes from Bourdieu, who has his own extensive theorization on class turning on different kinds of capital: economic, cultural, and social. See, e.g., P. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

28 Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 55.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.; P.R.C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Weaver, "Social Mobility in the Early Roman Empire: The Evidence of the Imperial Freedmen and Slaves," *Past and Present* 37 (1967) 3–20.

31 See discussion in Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 55f., who analyzes all the other people who appear in Paul's letters as well as *Acts*, concluding, generally along the lines of Judge, that the figures for which we have any evidence appear to be wealthier, citizens or

frequent run-ins with local authorities (2 Cor 11:25); he doesn't seem to be wealthy, relying on local patronage at a variety of levels, although his claim to working with his hands might suggest some skill as a craftsman (1 Cor 4:12; cf. the description of Paul as tent-maker in *Acts*);³² he seems to be that nebulously-defined middle-age, with little suggesting notable youthfulness or advanced years; he is a man, which afforded distinct advantages in his society relative to women;³³ and if we are to believe his claims, he previously held a position of some repute persecuting Christ-believers, a position likely reflecting some level of both education and social leadership. All these factors, combined with his substantial literary training and wide knowledge of not only the Septuagint but also Greco-Roman philosophical ideas, indicate a status congruence, to borrow Meeks' term, at a level above the vast majority of people in his time.

Even at a relatively high status, however, Paul fell well short of the upper ambits of aristocracy. He seemingly lacked in wealth and property, advanced rhetorical education, and political involvement at the wider civic instead of in-group level (his claim to authority to persecute Christ-believers paired with his knowledge of the Septuagint is a prime example of where his accorded status

freedmen, and possessed of a productive occupation instead of belonging to the landed aristocracy. As I noted above, however, both Meeks and Judge, as well as others, conclude that this tiny sample size indicates only one piece of early Pauline sympathizers, which they believe reflected the population's heterogeneity. The huge influence of the leader of a household on all its members, ranging from their family to their attached freedmen to their slaves, lends this conclusion weight.

32 I find the disagreement between Hock and Still, referenced above, to largely miss the point by focusing not only on *Acts'* historically-problematic account but by largely reducing status to a question of occupation. Though Hock laudably recognizes that the problem is more complex than simply a matter of occupation, he believes he can distill social class from Paul's attitude regarding his trade, which is an improvement but is still far too narrow a lens to investigate something as complex as status. The evidence from Paul's letters marshaled in favor of Paul's skill as some type of craftsman (1 Cor 4:12; 9:19; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:7, 23, 27; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7–9) is extremely limited and doesn't merit the weight and conclusiveness often asserted.

33 Women as potentially wielding outsize influence among Paul's social circles and other Christ-believers has been the subject of much debate. For the discussion here, it is also important to note that some scholars have argued that powerful women reflected status inconsistency, and women's lower social status relative to men generally made a group possessing alternate status indicators more appealing, e.g. T. Hammer, "Wealthy Widows and Female Apostles: The Economic and Social Status of Women in Early Roman Christianity," in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church: Poverty and Riches* (ed. G.D. Dunn, D. Luckensmeyer, and L. Cross; Strathfield: Paulist Press, 2009) 65–74; see also Sasaki, "Status Inconsistency and Religious Commitment."

among certain people, Judaeans or those with Judaeans sympathies, contrasted with the accorded status among Greco-Roman civic authorities), and his general occupation placed him clearly apart from the public life of an aristocrat. Paul was probably closer to a philosopher preaching on the street or in a house, like Epictetus, than he was to someone like Aelius Aristides who traveled around giving public declamations and treating with the local political elite.

We can compare this account with what we know of Epictetus and Philodemus, accounts that will replicate some of what I wrote by way of introduction to these authors in chapter one. Epictetus was born soon after Paul, in the middle of the first century CE, and like Paul did not seem to possess any sort of civic office or even citizenship. Epictetus claims no ethnic affiliation like we find in Paul, and even his name (literally “acquired” or “taken”) likely reflects his early life as a slave. When he finally became free, he seems to have, like Paul, enjoyed freedom of movement and a fairly large social circle,³⁴ founding a school after leaving Rome and instructing wealthy students such as the aristocrat Arrian, author of the *Discourses*, and possibly even treating with the emperor Hadrian if we believe the historically dubious *Augustan History*.

Like Paul, Epictetus seems to have been a possible victim of abuse at the hands of local authorities, with a tentative consensus existing among scholars that Epictetus left Rome under duress as a philosopher in the reign of Domitian. Like Paul, he was not wealthy, relying on his craft and/or patronage to sustain a simple lifestyle. Also like Paul, Epictetus was a man of middle age who operated in cities (Rome, then Hieropolis) that were notable as centers of commerce and culture. Also like Paul, Epictetus did not participate in local politics and did not have the necessary criteria to move in aristocratic social circles. Rather, like Paul, Epictetus seems to have derived his authority within his in-group (his students and the wider circle of knowledgeable philosophers) from his specific type of knowledge and ethical practice, both of which were tied to his wider cosmological claims. Just as Paul likely had some favorable interactions with those sympathetic to Jewish and Greco-Roman philosophical texts, so too did Epictetus likely find many who were favorably disposed to his philosophical and ethical teachings based on their familiarity with Stoicism and the virtuous nature of a simple life.

Philodemus shares a host of similarities with Paul and Epictetus, though he differs with regard to his advanced rhetorical education, varied literary output, sizable wealth, and landed family status. Like Paul and Epictetus, Philodemus was born in the eastern Mediterranean (Gadara, present-day Jordan) and spent

34 The *Discourses* contains a host of references to Epictetus treating with specific, often upper class, people, e.g. 1.11, 1.14, 3.4, 3.7, *et passim*.

time in major economic and cultural centers, specifically Athens and Rome. Like Epictetus, Philodemus studied with a renowned teacher of a specific philosophical school, Zeno of Sidon in Athens, and also spent time in Rome. There is much we don't know about Philodemus, such as his citizenship status, but he certainly had the means to travel to Athens to study under Zeno, something usually undertaken by families with substantial financial means. But like Paul and Epictetus, Philodemus seems to have relied on a patron, Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, the highly placed aristocrat who scholars believe owned the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum where most of Philodemus' writings were recovered.

Although we don't have evidence that Philodemus actively pursued the formation of a circle of loyal students and sympathizers, he nonetheless seems to have been active in philosophical debates within a literary-intellectual circle, and very likely taught within or apart from Piso's household. Piso was connected to the upper reaches of aristocracy in Rome, and was a powerful figure in the Roman Empire, father-in-law to Julius Caesar and father to Lucius Calpurnius Piso, Consul in 15 BCE. Philodemus, by extension, received substantial boosts in such status indicators as wealth, political standing, access to texts, and social-intellectual circle. He thus had accorded status both within his literary and philosophical circle (due to his education, knowledge, and textual production) and within the society more broadly (due to his position within Piso's household). His status congruence, in other words, seems to have been higher than Epictetus, whose was in turn higher than Paul.

Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus all seem to have shared an accorded status within their respective in-groups based on their specific types of knowledge and imitable, ethical practice. But their knowledge and ethics, derived in part from their cosmological understandings, also carried wider currency in their broader society, as learning, teaching, knowledge of texts (sacred, philosophical, or both—this line was much fuzzier in their time than it is in ours),³⁵ and the attempted practice of lived virtue were all things that seem to have been acclaimed in their shared ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman milieu. All three seem to have relied on their knowledge of texts, and specific education, to create and maintain their status within their given circle, though the size and composition of their circles likely differed. All three were tied in some way

35 S.E. Porter and A.W. Pitts, "Paul's Bible, His Education and His Access to the Scriptures of Israel," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 5 (2008) 9–41, conclude that "[t]he evidence suggests that there was a book culture that cut across all of the various cultural and ethnic groups of the first century," 31. Despite disagreements with other of their points, I think Porter and Pitts are right on target with this comment.

to more wealthy patrons, an unsurprising fact given the prevalence of patronage during that time and given that they were (probably) not themselves landed aristocrats. Of the three, Philodemus' status seems to have had the highest crystallization, participating in intellectual text production but also tied to traditional status indicators such as political office and wealth, while Paul's was the lowest, claiming ties to an ethnicity, religious practice, and in-group that departed from the conservative social, political, and religious elite of the Greco-Roman ruling class.

Intriguingly, as Meeks notes, some scholarship on status inconsistency (or "status incongruence") suggests that those with the highest status inconsistency will be those who seek radical changes in themselves and/or society.³⁶ This accords not only with Paul's apparent shift from persecutor to persecuted, but also in his attempt to fashion a new sort of groupness crossing traditional ethnic lines and eschewing traditional status indicators like wealth or political office.³⁷ The creation of new status indicators, such as Paul's new groups and initiation into the Christ-*pneuma*, likely appealed to a wide spectrum of people, especially those, such as freedmen or educated slaves, who were already highly mobile and subject to status inconsistency in the wider culture.³⁸

36 Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 55, citing, among others, Sasaki, "Status Inconsistency and Religious Commitment," 135–156. See also discussion of religion as vertical cleavage (along with ethnicity and language) versus horizontal cleavage (income, profession) in M. Dogan, "From Social Class and Religious Identity to Status Incongruence in Post-Industrial Societies," *Comparative Sociology* 3.2 (2004) 163–197.

37 See S.K. Stowers, "The Religion of Plant and Animal Offerings Versus the Religion of Meanings, Essences and Textual Mysteries," in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice: Images, Acts, Meanings* (ed. J.W. Knust and Z. Varhelyi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 35–56, who discusses how Paul defines himself in contradistinction to the dominant order due to novelty and indifference (from Bourdieu). This type of approach, argues Stowers, was much more common in those who were excluded from the traditional trappings of status, in other words who lacked status or had status incongruence. Defining oneself in contradistinction to traditional status indicators, furthermore, would result in additional status incongruence, much as we see Paul embrace his new loyalties and group construction.

38 K. Hope, "Models of Status Inconsistency and Social Mobility Effects," *American Sociological Review* 38.6 (December 1975) 322–343; J. Geschwender, "Continuities in the Study of Status Consistency and Cognitive Dissonance," *Social Forces* 46 (1967) 160–171; S. Stryker and A.S. Macke, "Status Inconsistency and Role Conflict," *Annual Review of Sociology* 4 (1978): 57–90. For a critique of status inconsistency as useful category, see T.J. Blocker and P.L. Riedesel, "The Nonconsequences of Objective and Subjective Status Inconsistency: Requiem for a Moribund Concept," *The Sociological Quarterly* 19.2 (Spring 1978) 332–339.

Paul's religious-entrepreneurial activity, in other words, is circumstantial but functions as additional evidence for framing him as one who already exhibited some level of status inconsistency, such as being an educated freedman in a Judean household. We might see parallels to Epictetus and Philodemus, both possessing some status inconsistency as highly educated freedmen and both adherents to philosophical systems that widely critiqued society and the values of wealth and political office.

A final note on status merits mention with regard to religion. As I touched on just above, in the ancient Mediterranean, religion was less of a distinct entity relative to things such as philosophy compared to what we see in the modern West. While Paul's texts and claims might seem to be more religious than the works of Epictetus and Philodemus, all three authors derived their arguments for proper understandings of society and ethics from their wider cosmological views that entailed particular conceptions of the gods. For Epictetus and Philodemus, the gods were not interested parties like they were in traditional Greco-Roman or Judean religion, a point of marked departure from society's general understanding. We find a further similarity between Epictetus' and Philodemus' attitude toward popular religion and the attitude of Paul, who condemned traditional religious trappings such as polytheism and sacrificing animals to representations of divinities. Paul's assertions about the transformative Christ-*pneuma* likely struck some in Paul's time as an equally radical departure, though obviously of a different kind. Others, meanwhile, may very well have seen in Paul's assertions about Christ-*pneuma* certain meal and purity rituals that were familiar religious practices.

For Paul, God and Christ were interested parties and required certain types of social and religious practice, but Paul's understanding of imminent end-times hugely differed from state-sponsored religious practice in the ancient Mediterranean that tended to be politically and socially conservative, with the highest positions closely tied, or even completely overlapping, with the financial, social, and political elite. Nonetheless, all three of Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus, despite their apparently radical cosmological and social claims, did not seem to push for a radical upheaval of the social order and in particular the overthrow of the social and political elite. The main goal of Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus, in other words, seems to have been the acceptance of their authority, claims, and demarcated in-group, in part a product of their status apart from the highest political aristocracy while still possessing many other high status indicators, particularly around text production and (claimed) knowledge of the universe.

How Do We Compare Literature? Re-Classifying Paul's Letters in a Socio-Literary Sphere

Introduction

Central to my project is a re-thinking of how we group ancient Mediterranean, Greek and Latin literature during Paul's time. This re-grouping is a fundamental and explicit shift in how we describe, classify, and understand ancient Mediterranean Greek and Latin literature, its literary characteristics, the relationship between texts, and the relationship between texts, authors, and society. In chapter one, I discussed the shortcomings of previous attempts to classify and understand this literature, such as the division between high rhetoric and low vernacular, especially as this heuristic division applies (or as I argued, does not apply) to Paul's letters and certain other, contemporary Greco-Roman literature. Simply critiquing previous approaches, however, is only the first step in the attempt to usefully re-think a body of data. We need to then propose new, different, productive ways to describe, classify, understand, and compare texts.

In this chapter, I argue that the genre analysis found in modern literary studies is a useful way to approach texts or types of texts that redresses the methodological shortcomings of scholarship treated in chapter one. The subject of genre is a complex field in literary studies, with a host of opinions about the relevance of the category of genre as well as a variety of ideas and arguments about how to define and apply literary categories to groups of texts. Thus I here review some of the major strands of scholarship treating genre and I then argue for a particular understanding of literary classification based on a set of polythetic criteria of form and content, what some literary critics have also thought of in terms of family resemblances. Genre in a strict, classical sense has been largely rejected by most scholars in the fields of literary studies and comparative literature, but a more nuanced, historically-contingent, multiple-criteria understanding of genre has arisen that is defensible from the perspective of both theory and our primary source data. This is the understanding of genre that is useful for the present study in delineating socio-literary spheres, and one that can usefully add to other ways of understanding the form both of Paul's letters and of other contemporary, ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman literature.

I conclude the chapter by supplementing my discussion of genre with certain scholarship drawn from media studies and linguistic anthropology. The field of media studies has undertaken tremendously useful work showing how a text's form and content intersect with social purpose, which I define as the particular goal or goals that the text attempts to manifest in the author's social world and practices. Examples of social purpose can be more nebulous, such as bolstering the author's authority and status among his readers/listeners, or concrete, such as persuading a specific set of readers about a particular argument from the text's content. Most texts contain a large variety of social purposes that are hierarchically organized, such as specific points throughout the text in service to a broader argument or thesis.

As I mentioned in chapter one, socio-literary spheres are fundamentally defined and thus differentiated by their social purposes. Paul's sphere is defined by several social purposes in particular: to explicate certain abstract, novel knowledge-claims about the cosmos, nature, and society; to present the author as imitable, ethical exemplar; to construct groupness among certain addressees; and to adjudicate on matters of behavior. As I also suggested in chapter one, this sphere's social purposes occur in an ongoing, dialogic social context that is competitive in both the realm of ideas (i.e., particular understandings of the world and cosmos, in other words, abstract claims) and the realm of practice (i.e., particular social affiliations and related activities, in other words, the groupness of the author's followers).

The field of linguistic anthropology, meanwhile, has undertaken work showing how a society's (or a given social sphere's) general, contextually-shared understandings of a communicative act's (e.g., a speech-act or literary composition) social purpose are latent and are continually re-inscribed by texts that conform to certain semi-malleable standards of form and content. Shifts or innovations in form and content also influence general, implicit understandings of social purpose. Form, content, and social purpose are fundamentally and inextricably linked and have ongoing, shifting, mutual influence.

Linguistic anthropology calls this implicit, historically contingent, contextually shared understanding of social purpose marked by certain implicitly- and/or explicitly-understood manifestations of form and content 'metadiscursivity'.¹ Metadiscursivity is a fundamental element of every socio-literary sphere, though it differs in kind for each, and it underpins the particular intersection of a given text's or type of text's form, content, and social purpose. I will return to expand on both the definition and application of metadiscursivity

1 See discussion in M. Silverstein and G. Urban, eds., *Natural Histories of Discourse* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 1996) 2f.

at the end of this chapter. Moving forward, we need simply to recognize that recent theorization from other fields (media studies; linguistic anthropology) concerned with the relationship between texts and society supports both my specific textual approach based on a set of descriptive criteria and my broader theorizing about socio-literary spheres and the wider literary landscape during Paul's time that upholds the existence of identifiably particular and ongoing intersections of form, content, social purpose, and the social location of the author.

An Introduction to Genre and Taxonomy

I see two major issues meriting analysis in order to achieve my hoped-for rethinking of how we group ancient literature: 1) A discussion of the concept of genre, which includes a variety of ways in which scholars have grouped texts, and 2) Further theorizing on the categorization of texts and the relationship of that categorization to its social-historical context. In many cases, the first issue is closely related to modern treatment of the second, and thus the two cannot be entirely separated in what follows. I will begin with a brief discussion of what we mean by genre, what scholarly work it can do, and how the concept is problematic in certain configurations. I suggest a way forward that is born of these critiques but maintains some of the benefits derived from genre as a classificatory system. I then return to some of the more prominent modern theorizing on genre to discuss in greater detail its specific benefits and problems. An engagement with modern literary theory will highlight and detail productive features of my specific method of literary classification before moving on to a discussion of my justifications for my own approach and a clarification of its central argument.

First, we must clarify what we mean by genre.² Daniel Chandler proposes a series of useful introductory questions pertaining to genre: "A number of perennial doubts plague genre theory. Are genres really 'out there' in the world, or are they merely the constructions of analysts? Is there a finite taxonomy of genres or are they in principle infinite? Are genres timeless Platonic essences or ephemeral, time-bound entities? Are genres culture-bound or transcultural?"³ Robert Stam in particular has added the question of whether genre analysis

2 Many of my comments and references in these preliminary paragraphs are drawn from the popular introduction D. Chandler, "An Introduction to Genre Theory." (1997) Cited 31 March 2016: http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/intgenre/chandler_genre_theory.pdf.

3 Ibid.

should be descriptive or proscriptive,⁴ a question to which I will return below. Jane Feuer seems to provide an answer to some of these questions, writing that “genre is ultimately an abstract conception rather than something that exists empirically in the world.”⁵ This quote from Feuer does well to point out that how we categorize is a second-order operation, that such second-order categorization is often not shared by the historical or cultural era in question, that the criteria for categorization are variable and hence the theoretical taxonomies for such a task are potentially infinite, and that as a second-order task our process of categorization must remain descriptive instead of proscriptive. Yet we must remember, contra Feuer, that genre groupings do in fact correspond to things in the world and that, despite a remove in time and culture, we can in fact identify commonalities across different texts that allow for empirical comparisons and conclusions, as I do in the present study.

For the moment, I use the term genre to merely denote a system of categorization and classification, though in what follows I will flesh out the importance of certain related features of literary categorization such as multivalency, impurity, flexibility, and overlap. The point here is simply that some scholars’ comments about genre define and sharpen my own system of literary classification (i.e., socio-literary spheres) that I argue does not suffer from many of the shortcomings found in other accounts. A flexible and nuanced understanding of genre retains utility in descriptive, classificatory, and comparative enterprises, and I deploy this version of genre in my own classifications and comparisons of Paul’s letters and certain contemporary Greco-Roman texts.

A pure, thematic approach to genre seems an inadequate way to group literature, as David Bordwell notes the universality of themes across different types of literature.⁶ Both Chandler and Stam also argue successfully against a purely content-based idea of genre, with problems including the universality of content limiting its explanatory power (similar to the problem with themes) and the lack of ability to understand *how* a particular element or elements of content are treated.⁷ On this note, Stephen Neale sees that it is not only the presence but the density, interplay, and functions of particular qualities that lend distinction to different texts.⁸ In other words, texts cannot be described,

4 R. Stam, *Film Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) 14.

5 J. Feuer, “Genre Study and Television,” in *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism* (ed. Robert C. Allen; London: Routledge, 1992) 144.

6 D. Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 147.

7 Chandler, “An Introduction to Genre Theory,” 1997.

8 S. Neale, *Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1980) 22–23.

and hence compared, by looking only to a single element, but we must generate a host of criteria by which we can map out the complex ways and densities in which these criteria appear and function between different texts. Yet maintaining the concept of genre—as do Chandler, Stam, and Feuer, among many others—leads to the inevitable conclusion that genres are always mixtures and that particular texts have qualities of different genres.⁹ Given this admixture, the question naturally follows (and some critics make explicit; see below) as to what purpose genre actually serves.

John Swales provides a possible answer to this question, symbiotic with Neale's point, by looking to the particular characteristics of texts instead of the more abstract and bounded idea of genre.¹⁰ Tracing his thought back to Wittgenstein,¹¹ Swales notes that theorists are better served by looking to family resemblances, a theoretical paradigm that has been usefully deployed in other fields such as cognitive psychology.¹² Family resemblances, with influence also drawn from biological taxonomies,¹³ are groupings of particular

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- 9 This is equally true of ancient authors as it is of modern ones: A. Fowler, "Transformations of Genre," in *Modern Genre Theory* (ed. David Duff; Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2000) 243. For a discussion of the importance of originality within generic constraint among ancient Greco-Roman authors, see F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Classical Press, 2007 [1972]) esp. 99, 158–159.
 - 10 J.M. Swales, *Genre Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 49.
 - 11 Particularly enunciated in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). Early and influential discussion of Wittgenstein's applicability to genre theory was undertaken by Morris Weitz, though many modern theorists dispute his conclusions: M. Weitz, *The Opening Mind. A Philosophical Study of Humanistic Concepts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); Weitz, *Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964); Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15 (1956) 27–35.
 - 12 For the applicability and influence of such ways of thinking within the field of cognitive psychology, see especially the early work of Eleanor Rosch: E. Rosch, "Principles of Categorization," in *Cognition and Categorization* (ed. in E. Rosch and B. B. Lloyd; Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1978); E. Rosch and C.B. Mervis, "Family Resemblance: Studies in the Internal Structure of Categories," *Cognitive Psychology* 7.5 (1975) 573–605.
 - 13 M.P. Winsor "Non-Essentialist Methods in Pre-Darwinian Taxonomy," *Biology and Philosophy* 18 (2003) 387–400. For relevant and interesting discussion about polythetic biological classification, see R. Needham, "Polythetic Classification: Convergence and Consequences," *Man* 10 (1975) 349–369. I thus strongly disagree with the line of scholarship arguing that biological analogy has limited or zero utility in genre theory: R. Wellek, "The Concept of Evolution in Literary History," in *Concepts of Criticism* (ed. S.G. Nichols, Jr.; New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1963) 37–53; I. Ehrenpreis, *The "Types Approach" to Literature* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1945); U. Margolin, "The

entities (e.g., texts) that can be delineated according to multiple overlaps of similarities, where no one similarity (contra theories of essentialism¹⁴ and prototypicality¹⁵) is necessarily shared by all members in the system and/or defines the constituent elements to a degree well beyond the other potential similarities.¹⁶ This conception deftly answers the critique of genre theories as over-reliant on a single or a limited amount of qualities with determinative properties for all members within the system.

The influential critic Tzvetan Todorov nuances this account even further.¹⁷ He writes that the very goal of genre is to treat groups of texts based on multiple overlaps and relationalities, looking to what is shared and not to what makes each specific.¹⁸ Making reference to “the scientific method”¹⁹—which

Concept of Genre as Historical Category” (Ph.D. Dissertation: Cornell University, 1973); J.-M. Schaeffer, *Qu'est-ce qu'un genre littéraire?* (Paris: Seuil, 1989). Alastair Fowler has been a notable defender of the utility of biological analogy from the perspective of literary studies: A. Fowler, “Transformations of Genre,” in *Modern Genre Theory*, 232–249; Fowler, *Kinds of Literature* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Fowler, “The Life and Death of Literary Forms,” *New Literary History* 2 (1971) 199–216.

14 Winsor, “Non-Essentialist Methods.”

15 D. Fishelov, “Genre Theory and Family Resemblance—Revisited,” *Poetics* 20 (1991) 131. See also Fishelov’s earlier definition that turned on prototypicality while seeking to maintain flexible criteria in *Metaphors of Genre*, 8: “I define genre as a combination of prototypical, representative members, and a flexible set of constitutive rules that apply to some levels of literary texts, to some individual writers, usually to more than one literary period, and to more than one language and culture.”

16 See also A. Fowler, “Genre,” in *International Encyclopedia of Communications* (ed. E. Barnouw; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 2:215–217. I do not share the trepidation expressed by some scholars regarding the openness of “loose networks of similarities,” as Fishelov puts it: Fishelov, “Genre Theory,” 126. Loose networks of similarities, after all, is one of the central ways in which we classify and compare all sorts of human activity, and furthermore I don’t think the similarities are as loose as someone like Fishelov claims. My empirical, textual findings in the present study demonstrate that the similarities among texts of this particular socio-literary sphere are strong, quantifiable, and apparent.

17 T. Todorov, “The Origin of Genres,” in *Modern Genre Theory*, 193–209, and Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975). For responses to Todorov, see C. Brooke-Rose, “Historical Genres / Theoretical Genres: A Discussion of Todorov on the Fantastic,” *New Literary History* 8.1 (Autumn 1976) 145–158; T. Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) 95–106; A. Rosmarin, *The Power of Genre* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985) 32–33.

18 Todorov, *The Fantastic*, 3.

19 Todorov’s concept of “the scientific method” was outdated even by the 1970s, by which time scientists and philosophers of science had productively explicated a cluster of

is central to my own concern with empirical, transparent, testable literary criteria—Todorov writes that a given grouping of texts need not include “every instance of a phenomenon in order to describe it.”²⁰ Similarly, as I made clear in chapter one, my delineation of a given sphere acknowledges that other texts might be usefully added or the sphere itself expanded and/or modified.

As Todorov notes, such delineations of groups are not concerned with “universal laws” but rather “logical coherence,”²¹ similar to my own comments in my introduction that my theoretical, classificatory framework can and should be judged on its coherence and utility in describing and comparing texts. Groupings of literary texts into genres exist at different levels of generalities,²² and as I’ve mentioned, any comparison and classificatory project will be a matter of more and less.²³ David Fishelov, for example, sees utility in applying pluralistic criteria to a specifically delineated generic field, looking to particular sub-types or “aspects of their interrelations and development.”²⁴ Fishelov is but one of many scholars, furthermore, who seeks to move beyond the narrower question of literary style to intersections of literary style with social context and society more broadly, a point to which I will return below.

Models²⁵ that group literature based on family resemblances or polythetic criteria point a way forward: looking for a number of specific qualities of form

scientific methods that share such things as experimentability-testability, repeatability, parsimony of explanation, and so on. Modern scientific methods tend to be overwhelmingly aligned, explicitly or implicitly, with philosophical naturalism. For a brief sketch of the concept, see “Naturalism” in T. Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 640–642.

20 Todorov, *The Fantastic*, 4.

21 Todorov describes this way of measuring the utility of one’s theoretical framework thus: “A postulate has no need of proofs; but its effectiveness can be measured by the results we reach by accepting it,” *The Fantastic*, 18.

22 Idem, 5.

23 Many theorists of genre and literary classification write of understanding a particular grouping according to more and less representative members, e.g. M.-L. Ryan, “Introduction: On the Why, What and How of Generic Taxonomy,” *Poetics* 10 (1981) 109–126.

24 D. Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre: The Role of Analogies in Genre Theory* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 2–3.

25 An interesting discussion and deployment of models for investigating texts can be found in F. Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London, New York: Verso, 2005). Despite the fact that Moretti uses models to track historical incidences of types of literature instead of modeling one particular historical moment, he nonetheless furnishes a useful defense of other empirical approaches to literature, such as computational stylistics and thematic databases, that synergize with my own project here.

and content within texts that are not necessarily universally shared by all the texts but that do cluster together, and that we can usefully investigate by looking into their relative densities and roles within different texts. What, then, of genre? The way forward just mentioned does not need a strictly-bounded system of genre classification, for it avoids such strict definitional lines in favor of looking to relative incidences of specific characteristics.²⁶ A substantial body of modern literary theory has engaged with these same issues under the aegis of genre, and in what follows I will engage with several influential works in order to flesh out my account of classification by more expansively detailing how it is deployed, how it functions, and its specific utility. Genre studies have been popular for decades in the widely dispersed field of literary studies, and there has been a recent and prominent re-engagement with the topic.²⁷ As I will show, we can maintain a concept of genre that is nuanced, somewhat fluid, historically situated, and that intersects with its social context and social matters more broadly.

Genre, Taxonomy, and Modern Literary Theory

Many modern literary theorists have rejected a traditional view of genre, but several authors argue persuasively that we can maintain genre in one of two

In particular, he emphasizes the importance of “[s]hapes, relations, [and] structures,” 1, a central concern of the present study. Like Moretti, I believe there is much that can be usefully imported from theoretical work in the social and natural sciences, specifically second-order models that provide a different kind of knowledge about literature and literary history than is typically derived from work focused on textual interpretation.

26 When discussing genre more broadly, we need not just specific stylistic criteria but rather “a dynamic cluster of formal, stylistic, and thematic features,” Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 8. I mentioned with respect to Rydbeck in the last chapter that my work here seeks to supplement his broader grouping based on grammatical overlaps by using criteria that engage both form and content.

27 The journal of the Modern Language Association of America devoted an entire issue in 2007 (October) to genre entitled “Remapping Genre,” the subject of the September 2009 meeting of The English Institute was “Genre,” and so-called “new lyric studies” have taken a special interest in genre, e.g. V. Jackson and Y. Prins, “Lyrical Studies,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* (1999) 521–530. For further discussion see J. Culler, “Lyric, History, and Genre,” *New Literary History* 40.4 (Autumn, 2009) 879–899. It is also worth noting that the eminent journal *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* has been a scholarly bastion on the matter of genre for nearly three decades, helmed primarily by Ralph Cohen, whose work I further engage below.

ways: 1) By looking to genre as a dynamic, open-ended historical process,²⁸ and/or 2) By re-thinking what we mean by the concept of genre, which allows scholars to usefully maintain some of the conceptual work that the term genre does, namely to classify, group, and relate texts to one another. I argue that despite flaws in some ways of thinking about genre, we should not entirely jettison the concept due to its conceptual utility in certain areas noted above. The concept of genre must, however, be carefully defined in a way that allows for flexible classifications of texts. I will begin by speaking in general terms of how I situate myself vis-à-vis these two approaches before moving onto direct engagements with specific authors.

On the first point, what I seek is not a cross-historical view of genre, though I do allow for conceiving of groupings of literature as dynamic, open-ended processes. I have selected particular texts at a generally defined historical moment (roughly contemporary to Paul in the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean) and do not seek to categorize or theorize literature beyond these particular historical bounds.²⁹ Literary theorists who see genre as a dynamic, open-ended historical process have a wider disciplinary goal, which is to critique the broad sweeps of previous genre theory that sought to positively categorize *all* literature within a static, theoretical framework. I agree with critics of earlier genre theory and I also have some sympathy with their definition of genre within the purview of modern literary concerns, but ultimately my own literary classification (socio-literary spheres) is more historically bounded, a difference that befits my project as literary historian versus theirs as wider literary critics.

28 Fowler sees this 'dynamism', specifically the "perception that literary genres are dynamic rather than static entities," to be the "the single most important factor separating modern from earlier genre theory," "Transformations of Genre," 232. For a critique of Fowler, see M. Jacobus, "The Law Of/And Gender: Genre Theory and *The Prelude*," *Diacritics* 14 (1984) 47–57. Fowler later refined his definition in his "The Future of Genre Theory: Functions and Constructional Types," in *The Future of Literary Theory* (ed. R. Cohen; New York: Routledge, 1989) 291–303.

29 As Moretti states in *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, genre as "morphological arrangements... *last* in time, but always only for *some* time," 14, emphasizes original. Genres are, for Moretti, a particular intersection of history and form; see also Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 10. I do, however, recognize both that the texts I've chosen cover a significant historical period and that change does occur in or around this time, specifically with the resurgence of classicism/Atticism and its imitation of mostly Athenian literature of the 5th and 4th centuries BCE. Fundamental to my recognition of the former is my understanding that genres and socio-literary spheres persist in time, as noted by Moretti, and that at least Paul's particular socio-literary sphere maintained significant consistency across the period containing the lives of Philodemus, Paul, and Epictetus.

On the second point, related to the first, some scholars argue that we should re-think what we mean by genre and by so doing retain the concept in a revised form with consequently superior explanatory power. This approach is simply another way of arguing that we should reject the previous concept of genre—one that delineates categories too strictly—but in the end maintain the word and concept as referring to a more flexible and dynamic type of categorization.³⁰ I generally agree with both the critiques of this latter approach and the positive suggestions it makes for using the concept of genre. I further suggest that my own typological approach in fact does the work these theorists seek to gain out of their revised concept of genre by using multivalent, flexible means of categorization. I shall move now onto a specific discussion of modern literary theorists to further clarify their points, critique their approaches with the specificity mandated by their careful theorizing, and expand my own arguments on the need to reject a certain view of genre while defending the utility of maintaining genre as a system of flexible classification.

Perhaps the most influential modern literary theorist who argues for a strict conception of genre is the formalist Northrup Frye, who outlined a series of extensive and specific criteria by which we can organize all literature into certain modes.³¹ Frye's approach may be considered a paradigmatic example of strict classificatory literary theory, by arguing that we may organize all literature into formal categories, and that these categories have precise boundaries and universal applicability. Frye's approach reflects an older generation of formalist literary theory, one that has undergone substantial critique, especially recently and forcefully by its particularist counter-part, New Historicism.³² Fredric Jameson influentially rejected Frye's strict modal categories, with the famous declaration that classifying according to firm boundaries has been "thoroughly discredited by modern literary theory and practice."³³

Jameson, despite this critique, was in fact a great admirer of Frye and has called for the maintenance of genre as reflecting a contract between author and reader,³⁴ explaining genres as "literary institutions . . . whose function is to

30 Fishelov, *Genres of Metaphor*, 54, sees this type of understanding as the "dominant trend in modern critical theory" on matters of genre and literary classification.

31 N. Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

32 See e.g. C. Gallagher and S. Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 15, 19. For the relationship between New Rhetorics, New Historicism, and the rhetorical context of ancient materials, especially letters, see G.O. Hutchinson, "Down among the Documents: Criticism and Papyrus Letters," in *Ancient Letters*, 34–36.

33 F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981).

34 This 'contractual' conception of genre, and of other elements of literary composition, is widely dispersed in literary theory. See, e.g., J. Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism,*

specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact,” and arguing for maintaining the concept of genre so long as it is “historically reflexive.”³⁵ This concept of genre as relating author and reader finds further emphasis in theorists who find the concept useful as a mediator.³⁶ Barbara Fuchs agrees with such approaches, writing that genre “is no closed or limiting horizon but a template for writers and readers that changes dynamically within history.”³⁷

Fuchs argues that by “reconsidering genre as a historically situated and motivated construction,” we can counteract the extremely particular and anecdotal nature found in New Historicism that rejects any sort of “iterated and codified cultural forms.”³⁸ This is the first approach I mentioned above in which scholars attempt to salvage genre, namely to re-conceive of genre as an open-ended historical process. It is also an important strand of thought that reminds us that particular historical epochs did in fact contain their own explicit genre categories, such as the epic, that certain authors were aware of and could freely modify as they saw fit.

I will not attempt here to substantially delve into any long-standing ideological divides such as between formalism and New Historicism. The endeavor is not only extremely fraught with social and political agendas but is largely ancillary to my own project. It is necessary, however, to be clear about where I stand with regard to these positions: despite my reservations about the pure formalism in someone like Frye, I do think that there are some types of “iterated and codified cultural forms” in society as well as in literature and language, reflected in the fact that certain manifestations of these forms do appear in

Linguistics and the Study of Literature (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975). As Fishelov points out, *Metaphors of Genre*, 87f., many scholars see as related to this contractual understanding the primary role of an institution of some kind: Culler, *Structuralist Poetics*; Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*; M. Glowinski, “The Literary Genre and the Problems of Historic Poetics,” *Ha-Sifrut* 2 (1969) 14–25. I think this ‘institutional-contractual’ understanding goes too far, however, in its seemingly-structuralist privileging of the role of social institutions and more explicit social understandings (e.g., Althusser’s interpellated subject). I prefer an account grounded in embodied social practice and implicit, shared understandings such as explicated to varying degrees in, e.g., Bourdieu and Schatzki.

35 Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 106–107.

36 N. Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); R. Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

37 B. Fuchs, “Forms of Engagement,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 67.1 (March 2006) 2.

38 Ibid.

ways that we can broadly generalize as historians.³⁹ Doubtless this brief explanation will not remotely suffice as justification for those on either extreme of this ideological divide, but it merits mention that my position reflects what Fuchs calls a “renewed interest in formalism within literary studies [that] provides a valuable opportunity for reconsidering genre as a historically situated and motivated construction.”⁴⁰

This “renewed interest in formalism” has resulted in many authors rejecting the strict formalism of someone like Frye but maintaining some sort of flexible, dynamic border between groupings of texts. This is the second of two ways I identified above in which scholars attempt to maintain the use of genre by re-conceiving of it as a flexible classificatory system. In their studies on seventeenth-century England, Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker explicitly delineate various types of texts, e.g. history, epics, creative writing, sermons, etc.⁴¹ These different textual groupings share what Sharpe and Zwicker call a *discourse*, what we might think of as contextual norms of form and content.⁴²

Fuchs argues that it is important to realize the many ways in which these boundaries may shift, blend with other genres, be challenged or innovated

39 I refer the reader for a more eloquent and lengthy defense of the constraining power of social orders in social practice to theorists such as Foucault and Bourdieu. Society and culture do not directly produce certain types of literature, as some structuralists and post-modernists would have it; rather society and culture function in terms of enablement and constraint. For a summary of the shortcomings of structuralist linguistics, such as found in Saussure, see my discussion of linguistic anthropology, below. A particularly powerful defense of my general line of thought about generalized social enablement and constraint can be found in the work of Theodore Schatzki: T.R. Schatzki, *The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), and Schatzki, *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Note the influence of Wittgenstein on such types of practice theory as well as on types of classificatory theory that revolve around family resemblances, though polythetic classification has also arisen separately via biological theorizing.

40 Fuchs, “Forms of Engagement,” 2.

41 K. Sharpe and S.N. Zwicker, eds., *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

42 The reader may note overlaps with my definition of socio-literary spheres, which turned on the existence semi-autonomous discourses. There is also a substantial current in literary studies that sees discourses reflecting not just literary norms, however, but ideological norms, such as “collective values and fantasy”: T. Hampton, *Literature and Nation in the Sixteenth Century: Inventing Renaissance France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001) 28.

upon, and so forth, highlighting especially the role of individual innovation in the face of the more commonly-held genres and values,⁴³ a finding with parallels in practice theory.⁴⁴ Fuchs also valuably notes that certain genre alignments may be unexpected or inadvertent in ways that belie ostensible intentions.⁴⁵ Fuchs usefully concludes her own discussion of genre by noting that we need “a historically informed notion of genre as a flexible hermeneutic template, whether intra- or interdisciplinary, with which to approach a wide array of literary and historical texts.”⁴⁶ Fuchs’ points on boundaries that shift, blend, and are transgressable, as well as her focus on historically-informed notions of genre as flexible, are excellent and do much to inform my own conclusions, below.

This brief scholastic lineage outlined above of those who attempt to maintain the use of genre can be traced back to the influential critic Ralph Cohen. Building on the work of Frye and the critiques of Jameson—especially as they relate to the latter’s injunction to keep genres historically situated—Cohen acknowledges the difficulty in conceiving of genre due to the wide-ranging types of criteria as well as different ways that genre has been conceived by different theorists. Cohen describes his own attempt to reclaim a concept of genre as such: “I wish to argue that genre concepts in theory and practice arise, change, and decline for historical reasons. And since each genre is composed of texts that accrue, the [historical?] grouping is a process, not a determinate category. Genres are open categories.”⁴⁷ This openness of genre is an important point. There is no fixity to genre and a generic category will be defined by a scholar’s particular mode of inquiry and the accuracy with which this particular inquiry reflects its data.

Cohen usefully continues: “The process by which genres are established always involves the human need for distinction and interrelation. Since the purposes of critics who establish genres vary, it is self-evident that the same texts can belong to different groupings or genres and serve different generic purposes.”⁴⁸ The “need for distinction and interrelation”, I would argue, is

43 Fuchs, “Forms of Engagement,” 5.

44 One of practice theory’s most important elements is its integration of wider social structures with contextualized individual choice. A next step will be to integrate this theorization with the findings from cognitive science, particularly embodied cognition.

45 Fuchs, “Forms of Engagement,” 5–6.

46 Idem, 6.

47 Cohen, *The Future of Literary Theory*, 204.

48 Ibid.

fundamentally related to the human need, or at least desire, to understand.⁴⁹ We understand history by analogies and by placing things within their context. Cohen's comment well defines my own project, for I seek to not only distinguish and interrelate different texts, but I am explicit in that my own criteria are largely second-order characteristics and fulfill the purpose of my own historical-literary questions, such as how to understand Paul's letters in their socio-literary context and how to conceive of Paul as author within the wider Greco-Roman ancient Mediterranean.

Cohen makes another couple statements that are also germane to my own project. He writes, and I partly agree, "that there are critical tasks that can best be undertaken by genre."⁵⁰ He later expands on this comment, writing that genres "possessed social purposes in a community, and that genres arose to contrast, complement, define each other's aims."⁵¹ As I have argued above, different types of literature had different social purposes (Cohen's "aims"), and both these types of literature and these purposes can be defined in relation to their own characteristics (social as well as literary) and in relation to one another (different texts within a given sphere, as well as the broader socio-literary landscape).

After discussing the work of Frye and Jameson,⁵² Cohen finally does come around to specifying what he means by genre, which he also intriguingly defines as "text-classes." The full quote is in order:

Classifications are empirical, not logical. They are historical assumptions constructed by authors, audiences, and critics in order to serve communicative and aesthetic purposes. Such groupings are always in terms of distinctions and interrelations, and they form a system or community of genres. The purposes they serve are social and aesthetic. Groupings arise at particular historical moments, and as they include more and more members, they are subject to repeated redefinitions or abandonment. Genres are open systems; they are groupings of texts by critics to fulfill certain ends. And each genre is related to and defined by others to which it is related. Such relations change based on internal contraction, expansion, interweaving. Members of a genre need not have a single trait in common since to do so would presuppose that the trait has the same function for each of the member texts. Rather the members of a

49 See the reference to the work of Estes, above.

50 Cohen, *The Future of Literary Theory*, 204.

51 Idem, 206.

52 See his critique of Jameson, 209.

generic classification have *multiple relational possibilities with each other*, relationships that are discovered only in the process of adding members to a class. (210, emphases added)

There is much here that is directly germane to my own project. First, classifications are empirical, not logical, by which Cohen doesn't seem to be arguing for a rejection of logic per se (logic being inherent to empiricism) but rather seems to mean that the process of classification is based on an accrual of the evidence instead of deploying firm, a priori categories. This reflects my above point that my project involves second-order criteria that I apply to my historical data. These criteria are multiple, transparent, and testable, focusing the discussion on particular qualities of different texts. I am a textual critic, according to Cohen's account, insofar as I seek out different ways of looking at texts and reading them as well as doing these same things in relation to other texts.

My criteria, both in their presence/absence within a text as well as their relative density, serve both to distinguish and interrelate, as well as to open up multiple relationalities. These relationalities are not closed but are subject to modification, especially over time with the addition of new members to a given group. Taxonomies are not fixed systems, and adding other texts to my account would result in adding multiple further relationalities. I argue that the members of my classification arise within a particular historical moment and share a general social and literary context that involves literary form, types of content, social purpose, and reflects certain socio-literary conventions. All of these comments—mine as well as Cohen's—reflect the realities of a classificatory system that seeks to reflect the dynamic complexity of any body of socio-historical data, in this case literature but also that literature's relation to authors and the socio-literary landscape more broadly.

I argue that my taxonomy provides a new way to approach both particular points of style within certain texts (Paul's letters and other texts within the same sphere) and broader issues concerning the relations between the text's form, content, social purpose, and the author's social location. Cohen adds further defense to this use of genre: "genres provide expectations for interpretations, and, a variant of this, genres provide conventions for interpretation."⁵³ Importantly, expectations and conventions of interpretation refer to both those within a given text's historical moment—in my case Paul's wider socio-literary milieu—and modern critics—here scholars in biblical studies and

53 Idem, 210; see also E. Bruss, *Autobiographical Acts* (Baltimore, 1976) esp. 4. This idea is not new, going back at least to New Criticism, and is widely and productively employed among many literary critics today.

classics.⁵⁴ Paul's textual genre, in turn, provides conventions (social and literary) that inform his textual composition and also guides the expectations of others hearing/reading his text, and these conventions and expectations stem from experience with other texts (like Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Death* and *On Piety*) that share similarities in form, content, and social purpose.

Cohen's point, that genre provides expectations and conventions for interpretations, is best elaborated by Hans Robert Jauss in an understanding that maintains wide and justified influence in modern reception theory:

The new text evokes for the reader (listener) the horizon of expectations and 'rules of the game' familiar to him from earlier texts, which as such can then be varied, extended, corrected, but also transformed, crossed out, or simply reproduced. Variation, extension, and correction determine the latitude of a generic structure; a break with the convention on the one hand and mere reproduction on the other determines its boundaries.⁵⁵

Cohen sees that Jauss' goal is "to trace the succession of responses to a text and to explain its relation to society, author, and reader."⁵⁶ This is a central element of the explanatory goal of my project, namely to link a particular literary type (or closely related types) with the wider social purpose and context of its author(s). The social context, in turn, encompasses author, reader, society, and the latter's many constituent elements such as education and class. I argue that a given literary form (or forms) provides expectations and conventions for a particular type of content and authorial purpose, and vice versa: a particular type of content and authorial purpose provides expectations and conventions of a particular way of speaking or writing.

In other words, the particular literary style shared by writers such as Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus is not shared by authors with a vastly different content. Likewise, texts of ethical-philosophical exhortation concerned with group construction and authorial authority are rarely written in an advanced

54 For additional discussion of the importance of foundational knowledge and assumptions of genre into the understanding and interpretation of a given text, see Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 26.

55 H.R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetics of Reception* (Minneapolis, 1982) 88.

56 Cohen, *The Future of Literary Theory*, 211.

rhetorical style. These facts mutually reinforce,⁵⁷ just as they are open-ended and allow for innovation.⁵⁸ The findings of scholars from literary studies like Fuchs, Cohen, and Jauss reinforces this study's central point: texts' and types of texts' form, content, and social purpose are inextricably tied and have ongoing, shifting, mutual influence, all of which we can generalize and categorize in useful, explanatory ways that also speak to the social location of the texts' authors.

The Theoretical Turn I: Social Purpose

My project focuses on particular literary characteristics, their relative densities in different texts, and particular elements of content. I argued that the relation of form and content is central to literature, and that particular constellations of form and content are shared by texts that I group within a given socio-literary sphere. This grouping of texts based on a set of literary criteria is similar to, and supported by, certain modern treatments of genre as nuanced, open-ended, historically-contingent categories that allow for the shifts and malleability inherent in classificatory schemes that pertain to complex phenomena in the human world, such as literature.

I have additionally argued that texts with a similar form and content also tend to have a similar social purpose. Form, content, and social purpose fundamentally interrelate. As with the relation between just form and content, however, we can find further justification for this position by incorporating the findings of other disciplines. We will see that scholars in the fields of literary studies, media studies, and literary sociology all make the case for the interrelation of a text's social purpose with its form and content, arguing that similar types of texts draw on shared cultural ideologies and values in similar ways to achieve similar aims.

57 My argument that texts in a given sphere continuously reflect and re-inscribe their sphere's socio-literary conventions speaks to how reification of a given genre occurs in the specific case and historical moment of each text.

58 Attention to the processes by which genres change has also been the subject of substantial discussion. Fowler argues that these processes "can at least be categorized. Those that stand out may be identified as: topical invention, combination, aggregation, change of scale, change of function, counterstatement, inclusion, selection, and generic mixture. No doubt there are others; but these would be enough in themselves to cover the main changes known to literary history," in "Transformations of Genre," 233.

As I will also show, we can seek even further description and explanation of this phenomenon (a group of texts with similar form and content transmitting a similar social purpose that reflects and manifests implicit, shared social understandings) in the work of linguistic anthropology. The descriptive framework of form and content, in other words, is not itself explanation.⁵⁹ Linguistic anthropology specifically addresses how a group of similar texts expresses a shared social message and purpose that is intelligible within the wider social context, what can be described as a text's or set of texts' 'metadiscursivity.' Metadiscursivity is the answer for why we find this particular interrelation of form, content, and social purpose: there exist implicit, fundamental socio-literary norms that are related to certain types of content (e.g., group construction, ethical exhortation, claims about the gods) that provide unspoken but commonly understood guidelines for the form and type of composition that have a particular social purpose or purposes related to these ideas (group construction, ethical exhortation, etc.).

I would further suggest that these types of form and content can exist not only in texts but, following John Searle, other speech-acts, such as Epictetus' discussions and lectures within his school as well as Paul's teaching and arguing. The relation between verbal and written forms of expression, after all, is a site of deep, mutual, and ongoing influence. The reader may also recall from chapter one that I partly defined Paul's particular socio-literary sphere as containing ongoing, dialogic interaction with an audience as well as competition that resulted in rival position-takings and direct struggles for influence over followers. Each of these descriptors could equally well describe non-written speech-acts taking place anywhere from classrooms to public squares to households to religious sites. My socio-literary spheres, by definition, refer not only to textual forms but also to social practices, social purposes, and social contexts, all of which involve a huge amount and variety of non-written expressions and social understandings.

Some scholarship from literary and media studies explicitly links texts similar in form and content to general social understandings, as discussed above. Near the end of Cohen's work, for example, he writes that "generic

59 Moretti usefully phrases the matter thus: "Not that the map is itself an explanation, of course: but at least, it offers a model of the narrative universe which rearranges its components in a non-trivial way, and may bring some hidden patterns to the surface," *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 53–54. Moretti's book seeks the descriptive model for his particular question. My own study seeks both the descriptive model of form/content and to link up this model of form/content with the social realm and thereby seek explanation.

composition expresses diverse communal (or ideological) values,"⁶⁰ by which he seems to mean that certain types or groupings of literature exist in a given grouping due not only to their form but also due to the fact that they similarly reflect and re-inscribe similar social understandings and values in complex, ongoing ways. A concern with proper behavior and correct understandings of the gods, for instance, will be expressed in one or more kinds of generic composition. In this understanding, Paul's letters and other texts in his sphere, for example, reflect and re-inscribe the belief that cosmology and ethics are fundamentally related, that group construction occurs along binary lines of both behavior and belief, and that ethical instruction can occur through the use of imitable exemplars which are fundamentally tied to piety and divine virtue.

These specific elements of content found in Paul's letters and his socio-literary sphere will be more fully fleshed out in the next chapter, but suffice to say for now that these elements of content both describe this socio-literary sphere and express a common set of diverse values. Once a given type of literature (i.e., generic composition)—comprising form and content—comes to be closely tied with certain values, subsequent literature that seeks to speak to these same values (i.e., has a similar social purpose) will in likelihood take a similar shape (i.e., form and content) to this previously-expressed type of generic composition. This likelihood derives from the implicit authorial understanding that certain textual aims (social purposes) that speak to certain values tend to have particular characteristics of form and content. This understanding, in turn, arises from the fact that this same constellation of form, content, and social purpose appeared in previous texts (and/or allied social practices, as suggested just above), known to the author directly or indirectly, which (presumably to some extent effectively) expressed similar, commonly held values and (presumably at least partially) achieved their social aims.

A host of scholarship in the field of media studies concludes along similar lines. Andrew Tudor, for example, in the analysis of film argues that "genre . . . defines a moral and social world," and believes that the replication of genre in a host of communicative mediums reflects and re-inscribes social values, much as we saw in Cohen.⁶¹ Some scholarship arguing that media and literature both reflect and influence society seems to stem from an overly-strong structuralist-functionalist understanding of genre, an understanding that does lend some caution to their broader conclusions. We can still, however,

60 Cohen, *The Future of Literary Theory*, 214.

61 A. Tudor, *Image and Influence: Studies in the Sociology of Film* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974) 180.

usefully deploy their understandings about the close, ongoing, and mutually-influential relations between literature and society (at large or only within certain social spheres), specifically how literary types deploy understandings from, and make their aims comprehensible within, a wider social context.

Stephen Neale specifically pushes for the agency of a specific type of media or literature, arguing that different literary types,⁶² for example, share general aims or purposes.⁶³ He understands genre as coming together under these shared social purposes, which act as “processes of systematization” firming up the characteristics that comprise genre such as form and content.⁶⁴ Thwaites et al., meanwhile, see this process as complex and more reciprocal than Neale, stemming from social change, as types of literature both reflect and influence these changes.⁶⁵ Though I have doubts about privileging the role of social change in the formation of literary types, surely Thwaites et al. are correct in pointing to the importance of social change and its reciprocal relationship with literary types. As I discussed with regard to some literary critics’ interest in trans-historical processes of genre production, however, my interest differs by focusing instead on a specific historical instance of a socio-literary type.

Carolyn Miller specifically relates social purpose to a given literary type, showing that genre is constructed around its constituent texts having similar social aims.⁶⁶ John Swales follows Miller by arguing that different communicative types, such as literary genre, are constructed around specific, socially communicative purposes.⁶⁷ Swales believes that the intersection between genre and society is mutual, with genre structured not only around its communicative social purpose, but also different types of social purpose leading toward different or modified types of genre. Miller and Swales both effectively demonstrate how literary types are fundamentally linked to their social purpose, and that an understanding of their social purpose is crucial for understanding the shape of a given literary genre or type.

Some scholars go even further, arguing that there is not just a social role inherently tied to particular literary types but that there is specific knowledge

62 I use the concept and language of ‘types’ throughout this study, though I am aware of critiques of the idea of ‘type,’ e.g. P. Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975).

63 S. Neale, *Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1980) 16.

64 Idem, 51.

65 T. Thwaites, L. Davis, and W. Mules, *Tools for Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1994) esp. 100, and more broadly chapter five.

66 C.R. Miller, “Genre as social action,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984) 151–167.

67 J.M. Swales, *Genre Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 46.

implied in the participation in a literary type⁶⁸ that “empirical projects” (such as the present study) can reveal.⁶⁹ Fishelov describes texts as “having a coordinative epistemic and social role” that is “part of a community’s shared linguistic and cultural knowledge.”⁷⁰ Envisioning community in the broadest sense of general literary and conceptual tropes shared across the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean, these argumentative lines suggest that Paul’s (and Epictetus’ and Philodemus’) implicit understandings of a certain generic constellation of form, content, and purpose was generally shared by his audience, and the fact that these understandings were shared is what makes the social purpose of such texts as Paul’s letters more easily achievable, or at least possible.⁷¹

In complementary fashion, some other scholars focus on how genres or literary types function as mediators of interpretation between author and reader.⁷² In this understanding, the participation of a particular text and author within a particular literary type—participation manifested in the text’s form, content, and social purpose that it generally shares with other texts of this type—leads those reading (or hearing) the text to bring particular understandings and/or expectations to the text. In this understanding, both writing and reading partake, and reinforce, particular literary types, and this usually happens unconsciously.⁷³

As John Searle notes, the rules of a particular literary type are usually constitutive, not regulative,⁷⁴ which is to say there are generally not explicit guidelines for literary composition but rather the author typically unconsciously adheres to some, most, or all of the socio-literary conventions pertaining to a particular type if they want to successfully express certain types of ideas and/or achieve the social purpose(s) related to a particular type of

68 M.-L. Ryan, “Introduction: On the Why, What and How of Generic Taxonomy,” in *Poetics* 10 (1981) 112.

69 Fishelov, “Genre Theory,” 132. Empirical approaches to the New Testament, and literature more broadly, are rare. The work by Franco Moretti is an example of the latter; for discussion of the former, see P.F. Johnson, “The Use of Statistics in the Analysis of the Characteristics of Pauline Writing,” *NTS* 20 (1974) 92–100.

70 Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 64f.; S.J. Schmidt, “Towards a Constructivist Theory of Media Genre,” *Poetics* 16.5 (October 1987) 371–395.

71 This is basically the same as Jauss’ ‘horizon of expectations and conventions.’ See discussion in Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 67–68.

72 Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 14; R.E. Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) esp. 130.

73 Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 14.

74 J.R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969) esp. 34.

text-production. The unconscious and constitutive nature of these rules, in turn, is closely related to the author's social location where they are exposed to other texts with similar constellations of form, content, and social purpose.⁷⁵ The intersection of form, content, and social purpose, in other words, is also fundamentally connected to the author's social location and context.

Some work in literary sociology also investigates the ways in which the form of a certain document is revealing of the author's social world that had a hand in constructing it. As Franco Moretti puts it, the goal is "[d]educing from the *form* of an object the *forces* that have been at work."⁷⁶ Moretti points to the fascinating work of D'Arcy Thompson, who understands forces of change in nature as both internal and external.⁷⁷ To apply Thompson's framework to literature, internal changes would mean that a particular socio-literary sphere develops its own internal conventions (recall my definitional language about a *semi-autonomous* sphere with its own rules of discourse) and external changes would mean that this sphere responds to, and influences, society at large (the same conclusion reached by theorists in literary and media studies, above).⁷⁸ Thus an investigation of form and content, as I undertake here, can provide avenues to speak to broader social forces at work in the production of specific texts, such as the education and social location of their authors. I will return to these specific points in my final chapter, when I talk about the broader social and historical implications of my specific textual findings.

75 In Fishelov's words, there is "no doubt that a genre cannot remain an individual endeavor," *Metaphors of Genre*, 15. As I touched on in chapter one, Paul had to have had at least some exposure to other works within his broader Greco-Roman literary milieu, and I argue here that he internalized conventions of a particular type of form and content related to social purpose from his experience, direct or indirect, with such texts.

76 Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 57.

77 D.W. Thompson, *On Growth and Form* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1961 [1917]).

78 According to Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 57, we can further specify this general framework by seeking an "inner nucleus" of discourse-specific form that is "molded in various ways by the characteristics of the outer element," such as other literary spheres or society more broadly. This type of account is a useful way to think about how spheres might develop, intersect, and change within their socio-historical context. See also J.W.v. Goethe, "Towards a General Comparative Theory," in *Scientific Studies* (ed. D. Miller; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). I believe terms and ideas from the natural sciences have huge potential for providing conceptual frameworks to investigate social phenomena and change, such as exaptation, hybridity, and the concept of taxonomy employed here. My thanks to Stanley Stowers in particular for planting this intellectual seed.

It suffices to say here that the findings of literary theory, media studies, and literary sociology support the fundamental intersection of form, content, and the broader social forces going into textual production including the social purpose of the text and the author's social location. My language of socio-literary spheres attempts to integrate this central relation between literary shape (form, content) and social context (text's social purpose, author's location) into its very definition, instead of adding a social dimension later on, as found in some literary criticism. It is for this reason I don't speak in terms of literary 'type' or 'genre', but rather to 'socio-literary spheres.' In the end, we find much that is useful both for this project's theoretical framework and for its attempt to speak to Paul's social location in these accounts from literary theory, media studies, and literary sociology. A communicative genre, or a literary type, is fundamentally related to its social purpose, and its form and content can implicitly reflect elements of society (values, change, etc.) as well as re-inscribe them. An understanding of literary types provides an avenue into investigating questions about the broader society and historical moment. A socio-literary theory incorporates the insights of both literary types and their fundamental relations with social purpose, social context, and authorial social location.

The Theoretical Turn II: Linguistic Anthropology, Metadiscursivity, and Metapragmatics

It remains to be understood, however, *how* it is that a certain literary type, or any communicative medium for that matter, is able to effectively facilitate the expression and achievement of its shared social purpose simply through general consistencies in form and content. As I mentioned above, with reference to Moretti, a descriptive model of the data is not in itself explanation.⁷⁹ The explanation for how literary types intersect with society at large can be found, I think, in the field of linguistic anthropology and specifically in the concept of metadiscursivity.⁸⁰ The concept of metapragmatics is also a useful way to think about how, and explain why, authors with certain wider social aims produce certain types of texts.⁸¹ In brief, I think that authors such as Paul

79 Todorov similarly argues that a classificatory "catalogue is of course only one of the tools of knowledge, not knowledge itself," *The Fantastic*, 19.

80 See discussion in M. Silverstein and G. Urban, eds., *Natural Histories of Discourse* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 1996) 2f.

81 See discussion in E. Povinelli, "Intimate Grammars: Anthropological and Psychoanalytic Accounts of Language, Gender, and Desire," in *Language, Culture, and Society* (ed. C. Jourdan and K. Tuite; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 194f.

produced texts containing a certain intersection of form and content (consciously or not) that occurred in other previous and contemporary texts in his socio-literary milieu whose social purpose matched Paul's own. For Paul to achieve his social goals—such as group construction, bolstering his religious authority, altering behavior, and convincing others about the truth of his broader claims about religion and the cosmos—Paul wrote in similar ways to other texts whose authors had similar social goals.

It wasn't necessarily that Paul explicitly chose to do so, but rather that Paul, and his wider ancient Mediterranean context, implicitly understood that certain types of form aligned with certain types of content and social purpose, and to most effectively achieve a certain social aim via text production one was best served composing according to certain, corresponding, implicit rules shared within a broader social context (e.g., a certain type of text producer, or all text producers). This general explanatory framework can be applied to any sphere, ancient or modern. Aelius Aristides' *Panathenaicus* had a particular social aim, showing off Aristides' education and status, and thus he crafted his text in ways that resulted in a form and content similar to other texts that had a similar aim, such as we find prescribed in Quintilian. The use of particular sorts of form and content signaled the author's social purpose to an audience sharing similar, implicit knowledge, and also signaled things about the author's social location, such as their status.⁸²

Linguistic anthropology explains this signaling of purpose through the concept of metadiscursivity.⁸³ Metadiscursivity refers to how a communicative act or acts—such as a text or entire genre of literature—signals its general type and social purpose. This can take a host of forms, ranging from specific technical vocabulary or other signifiers (e.g., mathematical symbols mark out a text's

82 Social standing or location can, of course, be aspirational. One of the reasons for certain types of textual production, or textual production itself, may have been to bolster one's social status by claiming that a particular author was already part of the elite due to possessing things like advanced education, skill, and literary discernment.

83 For definition and discussion, see Silverstein and Urban, *Natural Histories*, 2f. It is important to note that such theories regarding language, society, and their relation are a clear departure from the theorizing of Lacan and Saussure that retains substantial influence among many humanists, neither of whose work seems to be based on empirical studies of cognition, learning, or language. In the words of Elizabeth Povinelli, "most sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists . . . revolt against Lacan's near exclusive reliance on and algebraic contortions of out-dated models of post-Saussurian linguistics, social theory, and continental philosophy; his extrapolation of universal psychic economies from particular European language structures; and his conflation of textual and locutionary aspects of denotation and predication," in Povinelli, "Intimate Grammars," 192.

concern with abstract numbers and a likely lack of concern with something like group construction) to specific elements of style (e.g., rhyme and meter mark out poetry, which in turn can have a variety of types and purposes) to general elements of style (e.g., obscure Atticizing vocabulary or use of the dual can mark the author's intent to narrow the audience to the wealthy elite possessing an advanced rhetorical education, to demonstrate the author's literary-intellectual credentials, etc.), and so forth.

Metadiscursivity marks the intersection of specific literary-textual elements with the broader social context, as literary-textual elements within a piece or pieces of literature function as elements of encoded meaning that are decipherable to those in its wider social context due to general, implicit shared understandings about that type of literature.⁸⁴ Encoded meaning can only be de-coded, as it were, because the author and audience have shared, implicit knowledge about not only texts and text types but also about all sorts of other general concepts,⁸⁵ such as the nature of society and the gods. Paul's claims about Christ's powers and Christ's *pneuma*, in other words, were explicable to his audience because Paul and his audience had shared, implicit understandings about things like religion, the interestedness of god(s) in human activity, and *pneuma*. This general line of thought has underpinned some work on Paul's expected audience, who, the argument goes, must have had some Judaeon affiliation, Judaeon knowledge (direct or indirect), or sympathies for Judaeon sacred texts in order for Paul's comments about his Judaeon god and sacred texts to be even minimally persuasive.

This relation between textual "metadiscursive categories" and "social-interactional contextualization," to return to my more theoretical language, is fundamentally "dialectical,"⁸⁶ which is to say it is ongoing, shifting, and mutually influential, much as we saw scholars in literary and media studies conclude with respect to the relation between literary form and content, and literary types and society more broadly. Some linguistic anthropologists would argue that these types of metadiscursive communication reveal concepts that

84 J.C. Thom, for instance, argues that the New Testament authors and their readers shared a general, shared understanding of popular philosophical concepts, even if most of them hadn't studied advanced philosophy in any specific or systematic way, "Paul and Popular Philosophy", 57.

85 Note parallels with the view of some literary theorists, above, that texts reflect and reinscribe society's shared knowledge, understandings, and values.

86 Silverstein and Urban, *Natural Histories of Discourse*, 8.

are specifically cultural, and culturally specific.⁸⁷ Some linguistic anthropology even focuses on how language, and certain types of language, index social relations,⁸⁸ further justification for my argument that a text's form and content reveal things about its author's social location.

A study of how we index language in a given context also allows us to map the "micro-social" onto the "macro-social."⁸⁹ For the present study, linguistic anthropology would suggest that by showing how the language of Paul's letters maps closely onto certain texts within one sphere, but markedly less closely with texts in other spheres (i.e., micro-social issues), we can suggest ways to map out the broader socio-literary landscape as it existed within the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean (i.e., macro-social issues). Finer stylistic points, such as I undertake at greater length in the next chapter, actually index Paul as author and Paul as social being in his broader socio-literary context.

The form of Paul's letters, more specifically, suggests things about Paul such as his education and social location, parts of which he shared with other authors (e.g., Epictetus and Philodemus) whose texts closely overlap with Paul's letters with respect to form and content. In other words, an understanding of language (similar form and content in different texts) suggests things about the micro-social environment (Paul's social purposes and social location), which in turn suggests things about the macro-social environment (the broader, ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman socio-literary context which includes various socio-literary spheres). Such conclusions are not definitive, it is important to note, but they are highly suggestive and lend plausibility to certain historical reconstructions over others, such as I undertake in my final chapter.

We must remember, however, that text is not culture, and vice versa.⁹⁰ And though, to speak in a more nuanced fashion, texts can be structured by and in turn structure society, we must beware of speaking in an overly formal sense of society or culture as reified entities. We must also be aware that this structuring influence is not a closed, prescriptive *system*, but rather acts in terms of broader sets of enablements and constraints.⁹¹

87 M. Silverstein, "'Cultural' Concepts and the Language-Culture Nexus," *Current Anthropology* 45.5 (December 2004) 621.

88 M. Silverstein, "Indexical Order and the Dialectics of Sociolinguistic Life," *Language & Communication* 23 (2003) 193–229.

89 Idem, 193.

90 Silverstein and Urban, *Natural Histories of Discourse*, 1f.

91 See my discussion in this chapter and in chapter one about how practice theory conceives of human action in a way that improves on the overly-strict language of structuralism, systems, and textual formalism seemingly advocated by certain scholars in literary studies and literary sociology.

Nonetheless, a fundamental link between texts and the broader society does exist, and the reason why particular types of form and content can more readily achieve their (and their authors') social purpose can be explained by metadiscursivity. As Silverstein and Urban note, "[m]etadiscourse provides as well a crucial link between discourse and the so-called social, that is, relations characterizable independently of discursive interaction."⁹² In other words, we don't only have texts, because the texts are linked in certain ways to society at large, and many elements of non-literary society relevant to particular authors, such as Paul's use of "signs and wonders", also influence metadiscourse. Silverstein and Urban continue that the "[l]inkage of the social to the discursive can only be made through the metadiscursive, and metadiscourse forms part of the circulating discourse as well as being something superimposed by an analyst."⁹³

This framework, I think, provides an answer to the 'why' question I posed above, namely why Paul wrote what he did and in the way that he did. Paul's letters participated in a metadiscourse shared by the other texts within his sphere; indeed, we could define socio-literary spheres as groups of texts and their producers (including these producers' social practices) that share a particular metadiscourse.⁹⁴ Because Paul had in mind specific social purposes for his texts—what I've identified as shared elements of content within his sphere, such as group construction, authorial authority and exemplarity, modifying behavior, and the acceptance of certain abstract religious ideas—he expressed these ideas and purposes with certain types of literary characteristics (and allied social practices, such as teaching or arguing) that socio-literary convention had by his time come to associate with these purposes.

In other words, people of Paul's general education and social location who shared his social aims generally wrote in similar ways due to socio-literary convention: "there is a correlation between the social relationships and discursive relationships that is simultaneously a correlation between discourse relationships and metadiscursive characterizations."⁹⁵ As with the intersection

92 Silverstein and Urban, *Natural Histories of Discourse*, 23.

93 Ibid.

94 There are multiple levels of metadiscursivity, however, and we might also think of all textual producers as participating in a certain metadiscourse. Textual production itself was a general, semi-autonomous field of social activity with its rules of discourse, and the socio-literary sphere that contains Paul's letters is a constitutive element of this broader field that has elements of difference and similarity with other contemporary socio-literary spheres.

95 Silverstein and Urban, *Natural Histories of Discourse*, 23.

between literature and society, the social relationship⁹⁶ between authors in a given sphere and the form, content, and social purpose of their texts all constituted a complex, ongoing, shifting, and mutually influential process. Linguistic anthropologists would describe this phenomenon of textual production within a given sphere that is influenced by other similar texts and authors to be an example of “interdiscursivity,” an important way to account for Philodemus’ presence in this sphere despite his seeming lack of participation in public teaching and debates.⁹⁷ Interdiscursivity also well reflects one of the central characteristics of Paul’s sphere, namely the rival position-takings that its members took on subjects of cosmology and ethics, and the ongoing arguments its members seemed to be having with one another, directly or indirectly.

In modern academia, by way of analogy, we generally write in accord with various socio-literary conventions not because we’ve read a manual telling us to write a certain way if we want to produce academic knowledge but rather because we have implicit, shared understandings that this is the way to write if we want to fulfill our broader social goals (e.g., advancing knowledge and understanding, intellectual stimulation, professional advancement, attaining social prestige). There is of course space for individual differences, sub-fields of different types of writing, and some instances of extreme innovation. For the most part, however, we write in the way that we do because we participate in the same metadiscourse about academic knowledge production, and the field evolves in its form (academic writing has changed since, e.g., the fifties) and content (incorporation of new theories) due to, and through, the complex, ongoing, shifting nature of interdiscursivity.

Silverstein and Urban point out how a metadiscourse is also imposed by the analyst, an important point as it highlights how metadiscursivity is often

96 We need not think of social relationships in a concrete way, such as them knowing one another or participating in the same literary circle. The world of those who were sufficiently educated to produce a cogent, lengthy text was small, and I find it likely that Paul had, for example, heard of other textual producers such as Philodemus, or those like him. We can think of social relationships in a very general way that situates these authors in their social location more broadly vis-à-vis other types of similar authors. By way of analogy, as modern scholars we have general social relationships with all other scholars in the country or even the world simply by virtue of inhabiting a similar social location and engaging in similar socio-literary practices.

97 Silverstein and Urban, *Natural Histories of Discourse*, 81. See, for example, the concrete references in Philodemus to other philosophical cosmological and ethical systems. Even though Philodemus may not have been in direct conversation with philosophers from other schools, he certainly shared a broader social relationship, and his texts participated in a type of interdiscursivity.

only identified in second-order approaches. As I've mentioned at several points, metadiscursivity is the product of shared, implicit understandings both about general concepts common to a cultural-historical moment and about the conventions governing the production of texts within a certain literary type that share form, content, and social purpose. Metadiscursivity is frequently only made explicit when we define specific discourses in our role as second-order analyst. The specific literary criteria that I discuss in the next chapter were probably not explicitly recognized by Paul, for example, when he composed his letters.⁹⁸ We can, of course, self-analyze and import second-order categories onto ourselves and our own writing. But we must theorize, as I do in the present study, in a way that identifies formal and metadiscursive elements that were fundamental to, but perhaps not explicitly acknowledged by, those participating in and re-inscribing them. Second-order theorizing, in other words, is essential to the movement from description to explanation.

I will finally and tentatively suggest that Paul's particular text-production was fundamental to his broader social activity and agenda, what we can term his metapragmatics. Metapragmatics refers to the specific function of speech or, in the present case, a text or type of text. Some genre theorists have taken to using metapragmatics as the organizing principle of their theories of textual groupings, arguing that a text's function, or social purpose, is a useful corrective to earlier essentialist approaches.⁹⁹ A specific appeal of this type of approach, germane to what follows, was its focus on a text's social context.¹⁰⁰

Povinelli describes metapragmatic function as "what provides speakers with the means of building up from pragmatic acts higher order textual phenomena," such as genres.¹⁰¹ With reference to Silverstein and Urban, she continues that "[m]etapragmatic function is, therefore, critical to how textual and interlocutionary phenomena (including individuals, their gender, their culture) are rendered coherent, durable, and seemingly detachable from their local contexts."¹⁰² Paul's socio-literary sphere, in other words, is rendered coherent, durable, and detachable from its local context (recall my definition about a *semi-autonomous* sphere with its own rules of discourse) due not only to the

98 Note the exception of aristocratic, advanced rhetoric, which produced detailed and explicit handbooks on how to compose within a particular style. Epistolography also notably had certain conventions, detailed in handbooks.

99 Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 13.

100 Idem, 120; M.L. Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1977) esp. 86.

101 Povinelli, "Intimate Grammars," 194.

102 Ibid.

specific shape (form, content) of the texts therein but also due to the social function that these texts perform in society. A given sphere's social function, in turn, can also be classified into types, as these authors pursued similar types of "meaningful, genred social action."¹⁰³ Indeed, if we think of text production itself as social action (note the parallel with Searle's 'speech-acts'; Bourdieu would also describe text production as a social practice), we could even collapse Silverstein and Urban's differentiation between discourse and the social.

We can think of the metapragmatic, "genred social action" of Paul and others in his sphere in two general ways: those internal to the texts, and those external. Internally, we have the elements of content that I identified as central to this particular socio-literary sphere. Thus the metapragmatic function of these texts includes constructing groups, changing behavior, boosting authorial authority and exemplarity, and convincing the audience about certain universal claims such as about the cosmos and the gods.

Externally, we see metapragmatic functions on a more basic but abstract level. Here, writers like Paul, Philodemus, and Epictetus wrote in this particular sphere not only to attain the cachet of a literate specialist, but also to attain the cachet of specialists in abstract thought, education/instruction, and religion. The specific goals of the texts, in this perspective, were of lesser importance than the actual expression and staking out of their authority regarding these specific goals, be these goals concretely social (e.g., group construction) or abstractly scholastic (e.g., belief in Christ). This expression (i.e., the making of claims) and staking out of authority (i.e., position takings) in turn presumably lent these authors at least some authority and social cachet, what we can also call prestige or social capital. Whether or not their texts achieved these results, of course, we can't be sure, though we do know that the results were the product of many factors in an ongoing, shifting social environment: "[w]hat social work they [here, the texts] are pulled into is the emergent result of institutionally mediated interactional usage."¹⁰⁴ For Paul and others in his sphere, the social work of their texts stemmed from the complex interrelations between their specific texts, other texts in the same sphere, their specific social interactions and practices around these textual productions, the social location and activity of other authors in this sphere, and a host of broader social elements such as the role of texts and text-producers in the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean.

103 Silverstein and Urban, *Natural Histories of Discourse*, 97.

104 Povinelli, "Intimate Grammars," 196. Note that we see again this language of "institution" that I find too strong and overly-formalized.

Conclusions

This chapter has undertaken several tasks. I started from my conclusion in the previous chapters that previous attempts to classify Paul's letters, and ancient Mediterranean Greco-Roman literature more broadly, contained methodological shortcomings and insufficiently accounted for the primary source data. I then provided a way to describe and group literature that drew from dynamic, open-ended understandings of genre in literary studies, specifically those understandings that classified literature according to a host of family resemblances, or polythetic criteria, that can be empirically deployed for textual description, classification, and comparison. I situated this approach within the broader scholarship on genre in order to gain additional insights and nuance, and to show where my own account aligned or departed from other influential accounts of genre and literary classification. I then showed how work in literary theory and media studies supported several of my central methodological claims: the fundamental intersection between form and content; the fundamental intersection between form, content, and social purpose; and the fundamental intersection between literary types and society more broadly. These interrelationships are complex, shifting, ongoing sites of mutual influence, and my language of socio-literary spheres incorporates these insights from genre theory by making the relation of texts (and text-types) to society (and its many constituent elements) fundamental to its definition.

I also drew from literary sociology and linguistic anthropology in order to attempt to explain how and why it was that Paul's letters took their particular form. Combining insights from these fields and my prior findings from literary studies, I concluded that Paul's letters look as they do because Paul followed certain implicit, shared literary conventions, common to his socio-literary milieu, which pertained to types of literature whose social aims were similar to Paul's own. The intersections of these social aims and literary type can be thought of in terms of metadiscursivity, which describes how Paul's stylistic choices signaled his goals and social location to an audience who shared a host of values, concepts, understandings, and general socio-literary expectations.

Linguistic anthropology also showed how particular types of language index their authors in society, meaning that an author's language suggests things about the author's social location and the social context more broadly. Combined with my previous theoretical findings, I concluded that in a particular historical moment, an understanding of any one element (form, content, social purpose, author, society) had some descriptive and explanatory power for the other elements. I finally suggested that in asking broader questions about Paul's social location and his social activity we might usefully deploy the

concept of metapragmatics, which refers to the intersection of general social goals with things like literary genre. The texts in Paul's socio-literary sphere, in other words, shared not only types of form, content, and social purpose, but the intersections between literary spheres and society suggest that the authors themselves participated in similar non-literary social activities. Their texts and their textual aims, in other words, were simply part and parcel of their broader, shared social activity and aims. These aims, in turn, could be both specific, such as constructing a particular group or transmitting a specific concept about the gods, and general, such as bolstering their social-intellectual capital. In the end, we find that the language of socio-literary spheres usefully allows us to think dynamically about the ongoing, complex, shifting, mutually influential factors at play between text, author, and society in nuanced ways that incorporates the findings from different theoretical frameworks.

An Overview of the Data: Annotated Literary Criteria in Paul, Epictetus, Philodemus, and Other Pauline Comparanda

I have to this point made three points fundamental to my comparative project. One, there remains confusion about where to situate Paul's letters and some other contemporary texts in the ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman literary landscape. Two, we need empirical criteria with which to compare different texts and thus more effectively map out textual overlaps, such as between Paul's letters and certain contemporary ethical-philosophical literature. And three, while we should reject an overly formalist use of genre in the classification of literature, there remains substantial value in categorizing and comparing different texts on the basis of a set of shared literary characteristics. This third point is closely related to another that I previously made, which is that while a substantial body of ancient literature followed explicit, emic genre guidelines (e.g., ancient rhetorical theory), there remains at least one grouping of texts that remains insufficiently described by these guidelines (and in chapter one I suggested a couple more groupings as part of a wider taxonomy), namely those texts that I believe to be the closest comparanda for Paul's letters. Thus, we should derive comparative criteria from our own second order (i.e., *etic*) readings of the texts in question. This chapter details my second-order criteria, applies them to texts in this socio-literary sphere, and analyzes trends in their appearance and function.

I begin with some broader remarks on the justification for my approach before moving onto the specific treatment of my textual criteria, namely where these particular characteristics appear, cluster together, and how they operate in context. There are two possible axes along which to organize this section: by text or by feature. As one of my major arguments is that my newly-theorized socio-literary sphere ought to be defined by particular clusters of characteristics instead of by author, the analysis is divided into sections delineated by specific literary features.

Given the huge body of data for each feature and text, for reasons of space and readability I have significantly narrowed my discussion of the data from its original form that analyzed every text and characteristic in full. In what follows, I focus on general conclusions and trends from my own readings of the data. For each characteristic, I then provide representative examples of how

each text deployed this particular characteristic in context, speaking to overlaps and differences between the texts/authors where relevant. I have picked examples that are most representative of a given characteristic's use, but I have also selected examples from a variety of texts (e.g., not exclusively using passages from *Romans* and *1 Corinthians*) in order to demonstrate each characteristic's breadth across a particular author. In picking representative examples, I am admittedly unable to be exhaustive in support of my wider conclusions, but it is my hope that by pairing these general comments with sample analyses the reader will gain a sense for the broader shape of each text, author, and the socio-literary sphere as a whole.

Furthermore, as my wider observations in each section stem from my own extensive analyses of the data that cannot be included here, interested readers are encouraged to dig deeper into my appendices to explore all the instances of each characteristic in context with other characteristics as well as the relative incidences of each characteristic in different texts. There are certainly points of difference, for example in the lack of conversation/*prosópopoiia* in the two Philodemian texts, that allow the reader to get a feel for the shape of this particular socio-literary sphere and the place of these texts therein. My complete analysis of how these characteristics appear and function in context in all of Paul's letters and the comparanda from Philodemus and Epictetus are freely available as an online supplement to the present work.

This fuller compilation of data and analysis can be found in my professional portfolio: PaulRobertson.weebly.com. This website also contains some additional data for other texts and authors on whom data were collected but not substantially analyzed in the present work as they were found to stand outside of this socio-literary sphere: Pliny the Younger's letters, other texts by Philodemus (*On Frank Speech*, *On Rhetoric*, *On Poems*) and Epictetus (*Enchiridion*, *Fragments*), and Dio Chrysostom's orations (*Orations* 12, 14, and 15). This website also contains fuller data on Seneca's *Natural Questions*, *4 Maccabees*, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, *The Damascus Document*, and Aelius Aristides' *Panathenaicus*, all of which I have not included here for reasons of space as the spreadsheets run into the hundreds of pages. It is my hope that by providing this information freely others can improve upon my data collection and/or my treatment of this data in both statistical analysis and graphical visualization.

My analysis and conclusions below attempt to trace out both the relationship between different characteristics (and a host of corollary features therein, e.g. relative densities in different sections internally and/or clusterings with different characteristics) and different texts. The relationship between features

and texts is a complex one; I've noted that, within a given socio-literary sphere, texts vary with respect to the amount, placement, and clusterings of certain features or sets of features. I thus seek to enhance the understanding of both my newly theorized sphere (i.e., conclusions on my literary characteristics generally) and the texts within that sphere (i.e., conclusions on texts as they converge/diverge from general trends within the sphere).

Although I frequently indicate specific verses, the reader is encouraged to refer to the appendices to pair the discussion here with my empirical findings. Because Paul's letters have variable frequencies of these various characteristics, I cannot put them in descending order of prominence. My ordering here is somewhat arbitrary, with similar characteristics lumped together to more easily spot overlaps and linkages, in particular the following: claims with appeals to authority; conversation with *prosópopoiia/éthopoiia*; metaphors/analogies with anecdotes/examples; imperative with exhortation; oppositions/choices with constructions of groupness; plural inclusive versus second person address with first person reflection.

The Approach

The justification for my textual-comparative approach is derived from two sources: 1) The inability of other, previous attempts to effectively describe and compare certain literature, as discussed in chapter one, and 2) The applicability of my approach to my data, specifically Paul's letters, Epictetus' *Discourses*, and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*. The second justification is one that will be born out in the present chapter: its justificatory power will derive from whether or not my method in fact accurately describes the data and is able to provide a productive tool for fresh comparison. If my approach is persuasive and furnishes my sought-for re-thinking of where and how we situate Paul's letters in their wider socio-literary milieu, then it will have done its job.

Along these lines, it is important to note that while I think that my criteria accurately describe these texts and are useful for classification and comparison, I am tied to their current iteration (i.e., the list of characteristics below) only insofar as I presently believe them to do the best job describing the data. Other characteristics may very well exist that expand and improve my template (e.g., use of narrative, exclamatory asides). Some may find, for example, that certain of my criteria appear heavily in other types of literature, a finding that would require a re-thinking of my particular, theorized literary grouping. I may also have missed texts that are additional examples of this particular

socio-literary sphere: examples of other texts that I have not closely analyzed but are potentially useful comparanda (e.g., *4 Maccabees*; *Letter to the Hebrews*; several of Dio Chrysostom's *Orations*) appear in my appendices, and several are discussed at various points throughout the present study, particularly in my final chapter.

No theory is perfect and I expect challenges and modifications to my approach and method. Indeed, the very purpose of providing empirical, testable criteria in this project is to allow others to apply, test, and adopt or reject the theory as they see fit. However, the project here is not a subjective endeavor; it does not express a preference for a particular type of text nor does it provide a value judgment about a particular text's language. I seek to transparently categorize so as to contribute to a clearer understanding of what defines certain texts and thus to provide an empirical foundation for more abstract theorizing and conclusions, such as about the wider socio-literary landscape in the ancient Mediterranean.

One might object that the criteria I've identified for description and comparison were generated subjectively, and it is true that the process of induction is less transparent than that of deduction.¹ My answer to this objection is two-fold. One, the literary characteristics that I've identified do in fact appear in the texts. The precise definitions of these characteristics are given below as I delve into my reading. This is no different from defining one's theoretical terms, and the data do bear out my readings. Two, I readily acknowledge the potential or perceived opacity of an inductive argument, and I invite corrections, additions, and modifications. Others will doubtless find things that I missed, and such critiques and contributions constitute one of the goals of this type of project.

The Criteria

The literary characteristics below are those that I have found to typify Paul's letters and other literature sharing his socio-literary sphere. The characteristics were produced inductively, which is to say that I read all the texts multiple times, made notes about what was distinctive about them, and progressively

1 Induction and deduction, however, do not appear to be separate cognitive processes, but the former as successive, abstract cycles of the latter, which actually well describes my own method: A.E. Lawson, "What is the Role of Induction and Deduction in Reasoning and Scientific Inquiry?," *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 42.6 (August 2005) 716–740; see also F. Stadler, ed., *Induction and Deduction in the Sciences* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004) esp. 1–150.

expanded and refined this list through further re-readings of the data. I then returned to the texts and hand-coded the appearance of each characteristic in each text, noting how many times it appears in a text, where it appears in the text, and its range. I have also read a substantial amount of other texts that I argue are not part of this particular socio-literary sphere in order to check my criteria against them. A list of literary characteristics that once numbered upwards of fifty has been reduced to around twenty. I have also benefited from many commentaries that provided excellent introductions to individual texts. These works often highlighted one or more notable stylistic elements within a particular text, and these reflections proved useful in the population of my list. For further reading I direct the reader to my footnotes in chapter one for bibliography on specific ancient authors that proved instrumental in constructing my historical and textual accounts.

Table of Contents for Literary Criteria

For ease of reference, the non-annotated list, in order of discussion:

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The annotated list, with description, discussion of general trends, and representative passages:

Universal Claims or Assertions

This characteristic occurs when a particular author makes a knowledge claim with universal implications, such as about the gods, the cosmos, psychology, humanity, society, and/or nature. This can be construed as a form of appeal, such as the first clause of the following sentence: ‘Since we know x about the gods/humanity/society, y is a reasonable course of action.’ This can also be construed as a justification for a particular claim, such as the latter clause: ‘We must all do x, since the god has said y.’ These claims about gods, humanity, or nature do not have to be further supported, and can be taken as simply common knowledge, a reflection of the author’s purported authority, or a contested claim that the reader may reject. Though they are often universalizable, such as ‘people are known to be x and y,’ these claims can be more specific, such as ‘in this particular instance, the gods were unhappy about x and thus did y.’ This characteristic is perhaps the one most fundamental to Paul’s socio-literary sphere, as from general understandings of things like the gods, the cosmos, humanity, or nature arise ethical instruction, group construction, and personal authority.

Representative Passages: Universal Claims/Assertions

1 *Corinthians* 13:7–31

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.2.1–4

Philodemus, *On Death* 30.1–17

Philodemus, *On Piety* 31 (lines 878–892)

General Trends: Universal Claims/Assertions

- Claims frequently negotiate between broader, abstract issues (macro) and more specific, concrete, and often ethical issues (micro)
- Plural inclusive addresses, or no addresses at all, tied to abstract claims while second person addresses tied to exhortations and ethical matters
- Claims can be used with a plural inclusive address (first person plural) to subsume opposition/groupness beneath abstract claims
- All the works generally equate religious claims (belief) with correct living (behavior), often with the plural inclusive address
- Claims often occur in the context of argument, expansion, and further claims (claims-argument-claims), involving characteristics such as appeal, argument, questions, examples, and occasionally exhortations with second person addresses, often entailing a conceptual shift from the broad to the specific or vice versa

- Claims in a typical cluster (claims-argument-claims) often function simultaneously as appeals (claims-cum-appeals), and Paul frequently parallels authority claims with first person reflections and authority claims
- Claims in the context of argument entail both types of address (second person plural, first person plural) and frequent shifts between them

Appeals to Authority

This characteristic can take several forms. The author can appeal to the gods as arbiters, standards, or examples. The author can specifically quote an authoritative text or statement, be it from a god, a holy or revered person (real or historical), or a text. The author can also specifically bring up a statement from a purportedly authoritative person or text, which can come in the form of allusion, summary, or specific reference. Often this characteristic appears in support of a declaration or as the conclusion of argument.

Representative Passages: Appeals to Authority

2 *Thessalonians* 2:9–15

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.29.3–8

Philodemus, *On Death* 23.2–16

General Trends: Appeals to Authority

- Appeals can refer to the divine, god(s), texts, and historical or semi-mythical figures
- Appeals appear in support of claims and/or the authoritative relationship of the author with their audience
- Appeals to authority often function in parallel to personal claims (first person singular) to authority, what I term ‘parallel authority claims’
- Appeals frequently used to rebut countervailing opinions or claims
- Appeals used in shift between the macro to the micro (bridging the practical and abstract), often tied to oppositions and groupness, and occasionally to second person addresses with exhortation, plural inclusive addresses, appeals, and claims
- Frequent cluster of characteristics: appeals, claims, oppositions/choices, groupness, questions, examples, one or both types of address (second person, first person plural), and occasionally first person reflection and conversation

Conversation

This characteristic obviously best reflects types of writings that purport to record a dialogic setting. But many of the works here detail potential objections to authorial claims that are broached in a dialogic style. Any back and forth, be it real or fictional, belongs here.

Representative Passages: Conversation

Romans 2:14–24 and following

Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.26.34–35, 37–39

General Trends: Conversation

- Generally expands claims and broaches specific questions or objections
- Conversation generally takes two forms, one focused on abstract claims and argument, and another more closely tied to exhortation
- Typically occurs in a cluster with appeals to authority, claims, and groupness, a cluster that is likewise found for the characteristic of rhetorical questions

Prosōpopoiia/ēthopoiia

This characteristic is closely tied to conversation, and like conversation tends to reflect certain types of writing. It is also a specific technique that we find in the ancient rhetorical handbooks, a strategy for voicing and defeating objections or potential counter-arguments. While perhaps best folded into the category of Conversation, I maintained *prosōpopoiia/ēthopoiia* as a separate category due to the fact that it seems to figure prominently in several texts while not being present in two literary spheres (aristocratic-rhetorical; scientific-technical) that I propose in contradistinction to the one containing works by Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus. The prominence of *prosōpopoiia/ēthopoiia* in some of these writers should alert us to the potential trickle-down of rhetorical tactics from the handbooks of writers such as Quintilian as well as the above-average education of many of our writers despite not belonging to the aristocratic, advanced-rhetorical tradition.

Representative Passages: *Prosōpopoiia/ēthopoiia*

Romans 3:1–10

General Trends: *Prosōpopoiia/ēthopoiia*

- Can be clustered with claims, argument, and appeals, involved in explaining and defending abstract claims such as about religion
- Or can be clustered with exhortation, focused around ethical matters

Rhetorical Questions

This characteristic can apply to potential objectors whose questions the author then seeks to answer (note the overlap with analysis of questions/objections, below) as well as the author's own internal questions. For the latter, these are often present in the initial broaching or culmination of an argument,

especially when the author is challenging a particular point. This is a rhetorical move that doesn't seek to make an assertion based on a logical build-up, but to force an *aporia* with an often deviously devised and presented question. With roots in the Socratic tradition that seems to have exerted substantial influence over this particular socio-literary sphere, this particular characteristic is present even in modern rhetoric to blunt the extremism or unpopularity of a particular assertion by turning it into a question. This particular characteristic also reflects the more dialogic nature of this particular literary sphere relative to the aristocratic-rhetorical and the scientific-technical spheres. This sphere specifically encouraged feedback and dialogism by fostering an educational environment where the author was an authoritative figure teaching, encouraging, and solving the problems of the intended listeners/recipients.

Representative Passages: Rhetorical Questions

2 *Corinthians* 2:15–3:6

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.22.9–10, 15–16

Philodemus, *On Death* 32.2–28

General Trends: Rhetorical Questions

- Typically used in the context of claims and argument for a variety of reasons: to hash out ramifications to claims (bridge macro/micro), to broach logical asides, to persuade the audience of a particular point, and to bridge sections or ideas
- Cluster often involves appeals to authority, claims, groupness, plural inclusive address, and systematic argument, what we might think of as a typical argument cluster plus inclusivity (i.e., plural inclusive address and groupness)
- Can be dialogic or rhetorical, and treat real or hypothetical objections
- Frequently clustered with appeals to authority and first person reflections
- Often tied to the author's authority and exemplarity
- Occasional use in the context of polemics
- Occasional use in the context of exhortation

*Metaphors or Analogies*²

These examples range from vague metaphors to specific analogies involving certain Greek conjunctions. They are used for rhetorical flair due to their

² The first work that I know of to systematically treat Paul's use of metaphor was J.S. Howson, *The Metaphors of St. Paul* (London: Strahan & Co., 1868). Several other works focus on Paul's use of metaphors from different perspectives, e.g. Y.S. Kim, *Christ's Body in Corinth: The Politics*

interesting imagery, but also due to the fact that arguing by metaphor and analogy is a powerful way to make one's point. Points of general agreement could be tied to the author's specific argument with a simple turn of phrase, even where the logic of a particular metaphor or analogy doesn't necessarily follow. This characteristic underscores both the rhetorical skill and the logical nature inherent in this particular literary sphere. It is also important to note that the potential flashiness and persuasiveness of metaphors and analogies also make them favorites for the aristocratic-rhetorical tradition, a connection that could be structural (similar interests in rhetorical flair and persuasion), reflective of cultural trickle-down (as suggested with *prosópopoiia/éthopoiia*, above), and/or simply be a culturally-pervasive way of speaking (people of all educations and classes in our own culture today likewise use metaphors and analogies).

Representative Passages: Metaphors/Analogies

Galatians 5:1–12 (see also 4:21–31)

Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.1.7–9, 12

General Trends: Metaphors/Analogies

- Used to explain, expand, and defend claims, often in disputation and explaining novel claims to the authors' addressees that were potentially confusing
- Can pertain to general/abstract matters or specific/ethical matters, and appear at different places within such clusters
- Often occurs in the context of appeals to authority, claims, and argument
- Can also occur in an ethical-focused cluster: metaphor, second person address, exhortation, first person reflection, questions, claims, and appeals to authority
- Used as a bridge between the abstract (claims) and practical (behavior)

of a Metaphor (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), and D.J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003). The use of metaphors and analogies as part of Paul's overall rhetorical strategy is also a frequent subject of Pauline commentaries, and is a tactic that appears often in Paul's cultural-literary context. This is one characteristic that Paul's sphere prominently shares with the rhetorical-aristocratic sphere, which frequently deployed colorful metaphors to display rhetorical skill. I would add as well that the use of metaphor, not only by Paul but by other ancient Mediterranean authors, is a large field of study that I only scratch the surface of here.

Anecdotes or Examples

One of the more prominent characteristics, these can be incredibly wide-ranging. They can relate to reality, meaning the discussion of a particular historical instance or an actual situation in question. They can relate to mythical examples, of heroes and gods, often in tandem with discussion or assertion about proper behaviors or responses. They can be hypothetical, outlining a potential scenario for the sake of illustrating a particular point. And they can take the form of a more maxim-like quality, as a particular point is brought into the abstract for support. This characteristic, like metaphors/analogies, is common to other types of discourse, and seems to be a characteristic of language that we should read as generally common across educations and classes. That said, its situational, narrative, and illustrative appeal suit it ideally for arguments about issues with real-world significance, such as ethical and moral quandaries that figure prominently in this particular literary sphere. As a final note, I've included a couple instances of *apostrophe* within this characteristic (e.g., Rom 2:1, 17), aware of the differences between the two but seeing in the subject of the *apostrophe* a similar function to anecdotes or examples, namely to provide a specific object of logical support for a broader argument or claim.

Representative Passages: Anecdotes/Examples

1 *Corinthians* 3:5–15

Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.7.1–5

Philodemus, *On Death* 25.37–26.14

Philodemus, *On Piety* 46–47 (lines 1330–1363)

General Trends: Anecdotes/Examples

- Used to support claims and argument
- General argument cluster: claims, appeals to authority, argument, example, question, potentially further claims with plural inclusive address
- Used to move between the abstract (claims) and specific (ethics), as well as between types of addresses (second person plural and first person plural)
- Can support authority, present hypothetical situations, or provide direct quotations from authoritative figures or texts (appeals to authority, often with claims)

Imperatives

Instances where the author specifically commands his listener or reader to do something. This is more forceful than exhortation (below), frequently stems directly from the author's authority-claims, and often pertains to a specific course of action (e.g., 'stop reading!', or 'halt this course of activity

immediately!') rather than a broader injunction toward types of action which exhortation seems to cover (e.g., 'act virtuously/piously'). That said, there tends to be some overlap, especially given the fact that a grammatical imperative can be construed in a broader, exhortative way. I have attempted to separate the two as best I can via the context and tone of the passages, and in occasional instances where I could not decide I simply double-counted.

Representative Passages: Imperatives

1 *Corinthians* 6:1–11

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.18.14–16

General Trends: Imperatives

- Tied to general claims or more often to ethical matters (specific or general)
- Bridges the abstract and the specific, bringing general moralizing claims into the realm of specific ethical matters
- Often tied to personal reflection and the authority of the author

Exhortation

Instances where the author encourages particular courses of action, be they specific (e.g., 'write me back') or broad (e.g., 'do well to one another'). This need not take the grammatical form of the hortatory subjunctive, though it often does. Usually the author is pushing for the listener or reader to do something, what we might call a positive exhortation, but there are also many stances of a negative exhortation, namely encouraging someone not to undertake a particular action or follow a general course. It is important to note that these exhortations often come to a specific in-group instead of just general calls for certain types of action. This reflects, I think, the particularly targeted social and ethical concerns of this sphere. We also find that this sphere closely ties its exhortations to its universal claims, and that these exhortations can also occur only in implied form. I have generally avoided counting implied exhortations, but they figure in my descriptive analysis of textual trends.

Representative Passages: Exhortation

Philippians 2:3–18

Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.7.11–14

Philodemus, *On Death* 35.34–36.16

General Trends: Exhortation

- Typically of a general, vague, moralizing kind, often connected to piety
- Can relate to specific ethical issues or abstract claims

- Bridges the abstract (claims) and practical (ethics), often with a typical argument cluster (claims, argument, appeals, questions, etc.) moving from abstract claims to ethical issues (which can be specific or general)
- Often tied to oppositions, groupness, and the authority of the author
- Occasional movement between types of addresses

Caustic Injunctions

Instances where the author insults, attacks, or simply explodes at his listener or reader often by way of argumentative polemic. This can occur when the author is engaging a particular foe or idea that he particularly dislikes or can also occur when the author is exasperated with his targeted audience and voices his displeasure. Those familiar with the ancient literature on different ways to guide others, such as among the Epicureans, will recognize this characteristic as a 'harsh' type of corrective as opposed to positive exhortation that is more of a 'gentle' type.

Representative Passages: Caustic Injunctions

Galatians 1:6–12

Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.1.30–33

Philodemus, *On Piety* 16 (lines 432–458)

General Trends: Caustic Injunctions

- Tied to other characteristics indicative of intense competition and polemics, such as hyperbole, irony/satire, and pathos
- Often with rhetorical questions, in the context of argument and generalized claims
- Can be directed against specific people/things, or against general ideas/behavior
- Linked to claims that reflect the author's authority, often with opposition and first person reflection in a parallel authority claim
- Often tied to opposition and groupness, and linked with the author's own abstract claims in a typical argument cluster (appeals to authority, claims, argument), occasionally with first person reflection (parallel authority claims; exemplarity)
- Occasionally tied to wider argument cluster: questions, examples, conversation, appeals to authority, claims

Pathos

A very difficult characteristic to precisely pin down, this occurs when an author specifically invokes emotion or an emotionally-laden story to incite sympathy

or other emotion among his readers or listeners that helps bolster his chances at persuasion. Hyperbolic pleas, cries of delight or sorrow, and claims of suffering all qualify. While some instances of pathos are very easy to find, others are much more dependent on context and thus hard to confidently identify. It is difficult, for example, to know if Epictetus was speaking dispassionately about a particular story or if extensive histrionics in tone and/or gesticulation made their way into his presentation. That said, I am attempting to find where certain criteria manifested themselves in *literary* form, and I have attempted as far as I was able to capture instances of this sort. Pathos, also present in the aristocratic-rhetorical tradition, alerts us not only to the dialogic and suasive nature of this socio-literary sphere but also to its prominent role in public speaking in the ancient Mediterranean more generally.

Representative Passages: Pathos

Philippians 1:19–30

Philodemus, *On Death* 21.1–11

General Trends: Pathos

- Exists across a range of types of emotion; can be positive (joy) or negative (fear), and physical or mental/emotional
- Tied to the author's authority, and thereby supports subsequent claims
- Often combined with argument and (sometimes only implied) opposition and groupness to support claims, occasionally with plural inclusive addresses
- Occasionally tied to ethics, with exhortation, implicitly stemming from personal authority claims and wider, abstract claims

*Irony or Satire*³

While not always easy to identify due to difficulties in reconstructing context as well as a significant distance in time and culture, there are places where the appearance of these qualities is obvious. They most often appear in polemical dialogue with a particular opponent or idea, with the author setting out a particularly virulent attack to undermine this opponent or idea. Though these qualities do not appear with a very high frequency, they reflect the fact that this sphere can be just as concerned with adversative position takings and consequent ad-hominem attacks as it is with the logical advancement and defense of ideas.

3 For an understanding of irony writ large over an entire Pauline text, see M. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002).

Representative Passages: Irony/Satire

2 *Corinthians* 11:12–23

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.26.10–12

Philodemus, *On Death* 27.1–14 (see also 32.31–33.8)

General Trends: Irony/Satire

- Tied to abstract claims and authority, often with implied opposition
- Frequent overlap with hyperbole, reflecting polemical/competitive context
- Frequently tied to first person reflection

Hyperbole

A characteristic that often appears in tandem with others, particularly anecdotes/examples and irony/satire. This occurs when the author paints a situation or position in an excessively radical manner. It can be used polemically, to undermine a particular person or idea's intellectual responsibility or defensibility, and it can also be used positively, to overstate the applicability or justification of a particular idea or position.

Representative Passages: Hyperbole

Galatians 4:12–20

General Trends: Hyperbole

- Only occasionally present in Paul; not present in Epictetus or Philodemus
- Tied to opposition, claims, and personal authority
- Tied to other polemical characteristics (irony/satire, pathos, caustic injunctions)

Oppositions or Choices

One of the most defining characteristics of this particular literary domain, and one that defines neither the dominant aristocratic-rhetorical sphere nor the scientific-technical sphere. This characteristic can come in several forms. At its most basic, it can simply lay out two parts of an argument, or two potential courses of action. It can appear in the context of a logical discussion (e.g., 'by assuming x, either y or z are thus possible') or an ethical discussion (e.g., 'in x situation, one must choose either y or z'). The latter in particular is a central quality, as this sphere often frames choices in stark, dichotomous oppositions of value. Thus, one must choose between doing good and doing bad, acting morally or not, following the example of the gods or not, and listening to logic or not. The simplification of ethical issues to two courses of action is common, as rarely are two beneficial courses laid out as optional. Rather, there

is always a right decision. This often appears in the context of an argument with a particular opponent or idea, and the stark painting of this choice is an effective rhetorical tactic. Finally, related to these earlier points, the opposition or choice presented is often related to the formation of a group. Thus, it is 'we do x, whereas they do y (the opposite),' or a statement such as '*they* are of a particular type' or 'we believe x', both of which imply an in/out construction of groupness. The natural assumption is that the in-group behaves correctly while the out-group does not, and constructing groupness in relation to simple, binary pairs greatly simplifies and clarifies a complex social choice for a listener or hearer (the same tactic is still common today, e.g. in adversative political discourse). People actively engaged in intense polemics often oversimplify and radicalize positions, and this characteristic reflects group polemics that were tied to ethical, moral, and religious issues in these texts.

Representative Passages: Oppositions/Choices

1 *Thessalonians* 5:4–10

Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.10.25–27

Philodemus, *On Death* 17.3–17

General Trends: Oppositions/Choices

- Appear in a variety of contexts and clusters of characteristics
- Frequently tied to claims, and the movement from specific issues (ethics) to broader issues (vaguely-defined piety, morality, and abstract claims)
- Oppositions-claims tie often linked to plural inclusive addresses, with movement toward abstraction and generality, occasionally with groupness
- Link between opposition and exhortation often paired with claims and argument
- Often tied to personal authority claims, framed in an abstract-positive manner
- Frequent cluster of opposition, claim, argument
- Often tied to exhortation, be it abstract or more specific, with a frequent cluster of opposition, exhortation, and second person address

*Figurations of Groupness*⁴

Often tied closely to oppositions or choices, this can be as basic as pointing out a particular 'they' or 'we', either of which implies and/or attempts to construct

4 For an understanding of this term and its utility in socio-historical research, see, among many others, the work of R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

groupness. Frequently, negative or discredited positions are tied to an out-group, while the in-group is often tied to appeals to authority and/or universal claims/assertions. These attempts seek to portray the author as possessing authority over the group, and hence related issues of ethics and religion. In addition, the texts in this sphere seem to assume that the author is writing to an in-group; it is not clear that these texts were ever intended to be seen by the specific opponents engaged therein. Yet we should not assume all the listeners or readers understood themselves as belonging to the in-group. In fact, we should assume that these statements are an attempt to create additional groupness (i.e., add new members) by writing in authoritative tones about agreement with particular assertions or ethical doctrines propounded by the authors. Readers or listeners likely spanned the spectrum of identifying with the particular positions espoused by the authors: some people probably agreed with certain points but not others; others were sympathetic to the general framework but not specific points; and so forth. As we saw with oppositions/choices, the terms of group formation are often framed in a stark dichotomy, with the in-group associated with unobjectionably positive qualities like virtue, piety, goodness, and rationality.

Representative Passages: Figurations/Constructions of Groupness

1 *Corinthians* 11:20–32

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.3.1–4

Philodemus, *On Piety* 75 (see also 77) (lines 2158–2181)

General Trends: Figurations/Constructions of Groupness

- Tied to abstractly positive figurations of morality, piety, and proper belief (claims)
- Often negotiates between the micro (specific behavior or beliefs) and the macro (generally positive behavior or abstract claims)
- Frequently constructed around the author's authority vis-à-vis the audience
- Often tied to exhortation (explicit or implied), occasionally second person address
- Tie to exhortation can stem from general claims or exemplarity (personal reflection and/or appeals to an imitable authority)
- Often tied to opposition in the context of polemics and rival abstract claims
- Can occur in an extended argument that supports groupness constructed around general claims: groupness, rhetorical questions, *prosópopoiia*, appeals to authority, examples, metaphors, personal reflection, further general claims, argument

Plural Inclusive Addresses

This is simply when the author refers to ‘we’, ‘us’, or ‘our’, either standing alone as its own word or included in the verb in Greek. This characteristic is related to constructions of groupness but is more concerned with how the author self-presents. This characteristic often occurs when the author attempts to construct groupness around a particular abstract claim. When an author is treating something unobjectionably positive, like piety or virtue, they tend to use plural inclusive addresses. When the author is making a universal knowledge claim, such as about the gods, they likewise use a plural address.

Second Person Addresses

This refers to ‘you’ or ‘your’, either in the singular or plural, either as its own word or as part of a verb. This can refer to the audience more broadly or to a specific opponent, such as in a dialogic context. Different from what we find with plural addresses, second person addresses are more often used when the subject (audience or opponent/interlocutor) falls short of an ideal or the subject is associated with something unobjectionably negative, such as impiety or wickedness.

Representative Passages: Plural Inclusive vs. Second Person Addresses

Romans 6:1–7

Epictetus, *Discourses* passim

Philodemus, *On Death* 37.18–38.2

General Trends: Plural Inclusive vs. Second Person Addresses

- Both addresses widely present and flexibly deployed with other characteristics
- Frequent movement between both types of address, often containing the shift between micro (specific ethics or beliefs, with the second person address) and macro (general behavior or belief, with the plural inclusive address)
- Second person address often used in the expression of authorial authority and to ethically advocate (specific or general), often as exhortation
- Plural inclusive address often tied to groupness and abstract claims

First Person Reflection

Where we find ‘I’, ‘me’, or ‘my’ in the text, these are instances where the author explicitly includes his own opinions or thoughts, as its own word or as part of a verb. This can interrupt the expected flow of an argument or narrative, and

provides a personal touch. This also reflects the dialogic and hierarchical nature of this particular literary domain, as the author seeks to foreground his own personal authority either in the context of an important discussion or over a given audience or group. Importantly, not every instance of “I” necessarily refers to the author, such as in instances of *prosôpopoiia*, and I have attempted to note these instances. However, in general I have included most every instance of “I” within this category, reckoning it as a second-order formal feature referring to an “I” as opposed to solely the author. I remain open to arguments that certain uses of “I” which I’ve identified do not in fact refer to the author.

Representative Passages: First Person Reflection

2 *Corinthians* 10:1–7

Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.5.6–8

Philodemus, *On Piety* 48 (lines 1369–1390)

General Trends: First Person Reflection

- Tied to generalized claims and/or to reaffirm author’s authoritative status
- Often tied to appeals to authority in constructing parallel authority claims
- Can be tied to claims and plural inclusive addresses, or second person addresses with exhortation (explicit or implied)
- Frequently clustered with claims and argument, often with corollary characteristics: appeals to authority, questions, metaphors, examples, etc.

Analysis of Questions or Objections

This characteristic can take several forms. An author can ask a question and then go about answering it, which can either imply that the question was asked by someone else or that the author is simply going about his argument in a systematic way that addresses potential concerns. The questions or objections may be hypothetical, where the author anticipates or provides his own potential issues that require further analysis or clarification, or real, such as where the author is forced to answer a specific objection from an opponent or his listeners/readers. The latter, of course, can be difficult to precisely reconstruct, but certain texts reflect a dialogic setting or involve a situation with previous dialogue. This particular characteristic reveals the systematic nature of this sphere (see next, below), as at issue is the justification for certain ideas and actions.

Representative Passages: Analysis of Questions/Objections

Romans 2:25–29

Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.16.24–27

Philodemus, *On Death* 32.31–33.8

General Trends: Analysis of Questions/Objections

- Typically used in the context of claims and argument
- Often linked to first person reflection, authority, and opposition
- Can be dialogic or rhetorical, specific or general, and real or hypothetical
- Can be used to bridge the micro (specific behaviors or beliefs) and the macro (general ethics and claims)
- Occasionally tied to a cluster with appeals to authority, groupness with plural inclusive addresses, shifts between addresses, and exhortation
- Often tied to groupness, appeals to authority, and plural inclusive addresses

Systematic Argument

This characteristic has some structural parallels with the analysis of questions/objections. It occurs where the author, instead of skating over different issues, as we often find in the aristocratic-rhetorical tradition, instead attempts to discuss a particular point or objection in a sustained, logical manner. This quality is shared with the sphere of technical writing, whose very subject matter is based on in-depth, logical analysis. The authors here may very well skip around in the overall presentation of their work, but specific internal units often possess a coherence and logical order. Typically, the overall work has a logical purpose and proceeds in a straightforward fashion that values claims, argument, and authority (claims and appeals).

Representative Passages: Systematic Argument

Galatians 3:13–26

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.2.5–10

Philodemus, *On Death* 16.4–10

Philodemus, *On Piety* 41–42 (lines 1160–1205)

General Trends: Systematic Argument

- Appears consistently across all three authors, and used flexibly therein
- Correlated with claims, appeals to authority, and plural inclusive addresses; inversely correlated with pathos, exhortation, and first person reflections
- Often clusters with a group of characteristics: claims, questions, examples, metaphors, appeals to authority, potential objections, and further claims
- Can be used polemically, clustered with hyperbole, pathos, caustic injunctions, and irony/satire
- Can occur with exhortation and groupness as well as first person reflection, often in a parallel authority construction with appeals to authority
- Often bridges between the micro (specific beliefs, behavior) and the macro (general claims and ethics), explaining or defending the relation between the two

General Comments

It is important to realize first of all that certain characteristics can and do overlap. This is expected, and certain categories naturally tend to overlap more than others, such as universal claims/assertions and appeals to authority. A main reason for this fact is the very close nature of some of these characteristics, as I've noted in my annotations above. Another reason is the fact that certain characteristics simply logically entail others, such as where the act of answering certain questions or objections lends itself to the narrative tactic of conversation.

There is also the precise organization of these features in a particular text or author. It is not enough simply to say that a certain characteristic appears often in a text, or that it often occurs in tandem with another characteristic. To understand the form of a particular text we must ask two further questions: 1) In what relative density do certain features appear, and 2) Where and in what context? This attempt at describing the clustering of characteristics will not just tell us that two features are important, for example, but which is more prominent in the text and in what respects the two function relative to one another.

The clustering of certain features is also an additional site for re-description and explanation. By mapping out the literary features as I propose to do here we can ask a series of useful follow-up questions, for example: Which authors tend to cluster ethical statements with statements about the gods? Why does one author provide many more quotations from an authoritative text than another? In what context do metaphors most appear? And so on. Thus a purely quantitative approach can move to qualitative issues, as we seek to go beyond the analysis of numbers.

An Introduction to the Data Sets

The reader is encouraged to make frequent reference to the appendices, which contain my textual data in various forms. Most relevant for reference and to understand the general shape of each text relative to one another, I have populated one master spreadsheet, containing the amounts and relative percentages of each of my characteristics for all textual comparanda therein. I chose not to provide data for every possible text cited in the secondary literature as relevant comparative material for several reasons. One, there is simply not the space to map out dozens of texts. Two, I have chosen to keep the focus on several texts, or types of texts, germane to my project of delineating one socio-literary sphere in particular. Thus my master list is populated primarily

by those texts that I argue belong in Paul's sphere, or those texts that are often likened to Paul's letters but which I argue are not useful comparanda. While I noted in chapter one that the present study is partly concerned with mapping out the wider Greco-Roman literary landscape, I have tried to remain attentive to the narrower goal of situating Paul and his letters. And third, many potential comparanda are too far from Paul's letters in form and content to provide any useful comparison. Such texts (e.g., the so-called 'non-literary papyri', or orations by someone like Demetrius of Phalerum), which I treat in my first and last chapters when discussing other scholars' comparanda, are not included in my analysis due to fundamental differences in form, content, and social purpose. I have nonetheless included a few additional examples (e.g., certain of Dio Chrysostom's orations) to illustrate their differences.

My conclusions in what follows largely stem from my narrow, minutiae-based analysis of each text. In my own data-centric research, whose complete findings do not appear here but I have posted as a free online supplement, I generated lists showing where certain characteristics cluster together. I have identified in these lists general types of overlap, and within the lists themselves I also discussed potentially relevant issues of content, specifying where possible or interesting the exact nature and context of the appearance of my criteria. In the present analysis, I have reproduced the most representative and notable findings from that body of research.

I also populated one spreadsheet for each text, included in my appendices, detailing the location of every occurrence of each characteristic, the total number of each characteristic occurring in the text, and the percentage of total characteristics that each particular characteristic constitutes. As with the master spreadsheet, the reader will notice that a range is given for the total number of each characteristic and the corresponding percentage. This is due to the fact that some instances of a particular characteristic are dubious examples, and I have thus given a range, with the lower number counting none of the dubious examples, and the higher number counting all dubious examples. As is often the case with taxonomies, some characteristics fit better than others in different places.

The reader should take special note that the percentage given denotes the percentage of a given characteristic relative to only the other characteristics here discussed. The percentage does not indicate the amount of words devoted to a particular characteristic relative to the total amount of words in its text, for example, nor does this measure indicate the prevalence of a particular characteristic relative to all possible textual characteristics. In other words, this percentage metric does not reflect a comprehensive attempt to measure every single potential characteristic of a given text. As with any other attempt to

quantify and describe texts, such an approach is by nature imperfect and only partial, though I think a substantial improvement on previous approaches by forwarding empirical conclusions that allow for correction.

This percentage metric represents an attempt to detail the complex shape of every text within my theorized sphere. The question is not simply that these given texts can and should be grouped together based on a set of shared characteristics—though that is certainly one of my main points and one that the data demonstrate—but also how these characteristics specifically group together in each text, which texts more closely align or differ based on certain criteria, and in which ways. We can thus provide more complex and accurate descriptions (e.g., ‘this particular text predominantly has x and y characteristics’) which in turn lead to more specific and subtle comparisons (e.g., ‘text a and b are alike in characteristics x and y , but differ substantially in z ’) and inform the investigation of why particular similarities and differences exist (e.g., ‘... possibly as a result of w and v ’).

A second note concerns the use of the notation ‘and following’, depicted in the spreadsheets as “f.” This represents the fact that a particular characteristic appears in a given passage and continues to appear in subsequent passages. This presented a particular problem in classification—was this simply one long instance of a particular characteristic or several instances, one after another? Where so indicated with “f.”, I’ve chosen to answer the question in favor of the former. I differentiate the use of ‘and following’ and ‘multiple instances’ as such: where the narrative flow of the text is unbroken and continues detailing the same idea or deploying the same characteristic, I see it as an instance of ‘and following.’ When the specific point of context, content, or narrative changed, I listed the characteristic again. This method is undoubtedly imperfect, but it does still indicate general trends. My point is that the appearance of a particular characteristic that is continued within the same general thought should be reckoned as one general instance, as the decision (conscious or not) was made one single time to use this characteristic.

At the same time, we must remember that when one uses an analogy, for example, continued mention of the analogy in the subsequent narrative may very well add rhetorical force to the analogy and may also show this analogy (or characteristic more generally) to be of particular concern to a given author. Indeed, an extended metaphor across 100 lines and one across 10 lines are given the same weight in my measure of relative percentage, and this is an area with potential for further exploration in this type of analysis. This type of work, however, should be undertaken cautiously. While noting length is important, an attempt to discuss which characteristics have more narrative force and

importance than others will be quickly and perhaps permanently mired in the deeply-fraught territory of subjective judgment.

We must also remember that different ancient texts are organized differently (think of, for example, Stephanus Lines in Plato compared to verse numbers in the New Testament), and come to us in different states of wholeness (compare the extremely fragmented works derived from the rolls at Herculaneum against the repeatedly copied, edited, and re-edited works of Paul). Furthermore, ancient texts in their original form frequently did not note sentence breaks or other grammatical-narrative divisions. Thus attempts to note how many sentences or sections different characteristics occupy will always remain inconclusive, as well as ponderous. I see potential fruit in studies looking at individual texts, such as comparing two Pauline letters, in an attempt to see how certain characteristics play out across clauses or word totals.

My own approach here attempts to answer this problem in two ways. First, my attached spreadsheets clearly denote occasions where a particular characteristic is extended to two, three, or even more passages. A quick glance at the relative percentages of two characteristics will quickly tell the researcher whether one characteristic is typical of 'one and done' usages, or if it typically trends into longer manifestations. Again, one of the strengths of my approach is the transparent nature of presenting the data as such. Second, I can account for shorter versus longer appearances of characteristics by noting where a particularly drawn-out characteristic intersects with other characteristics. An off-hand metaphor occurring within a small clause covers less ground than one spanning several sentences, and thus has less chance to overlap with other characteristics. When I discuss an extremely short metaphor, likely the best I will be able to do is note the general context and the characteristics in the vicinity. When I discuss a lengthy multiple-line metaphor, I will be able to talk about where, how, and to what extent other characteristics intersect with it.

All this aside, it bears mentioning that my answer to the 'and following' or 'multiple listings' question will always remain an inexact one. Certain texts may simply repeat something over and over again due to their particular structure. Yet, even if a particular characteristic is over- or under-represented in a given text, the other characteristics' density relative to one another is still telling as to the shape of the text. Over-representation may particularly occur in texts where the manuscript is broken, such as we frequently find in Philodemus' texts where I may have re-listed a characteristic where the original narrative might have instead merited an 'and following.'

An additional point concerns the brevity of some texts. As is the case in texts like *Philemon*, the shortness of some texts means that the relative

prominence of certain characteristics is a poor indication of a given author's stylistic proclivities. A text only a few hundred words long substantially limits our ability to get a sense of broader literary technique(s). Furthermore, a very short text means that the range presented for total instances of a given characteristic results in an unhelpfully wide percentage of occurrences. When the total amount of characteristics is, say, 20, the difference in relative percentage between 1 and 3 particular occurrences is vast. While this situation does tell us something, namely that this particular characteristic was present but not hugely dominant, it nonetheless presents an overly crude understanding of the text in question, especially when compared to the more robust data present in longer texts. As with any empirical project, we must be wary of limited sample size.

I therefore think that we must place greater weight on the lengthier texts when theorizing about types of literature and types of authors. *Romans* compared to *Philemon*, for example, provides a much wider and thus more statistically sound body of evidence for the type of empirical work I attempt here. The lengthier our texts the more sophisticated our understandings of their authors' style(s) will be. We might usefully combine works like *Philemon* with *Romans* as part of a broader attempt to compare Paul's narrative techniques in his surviving works to the techniques found in other authors' surviving works, such as Philodemus.

At the same time, we mustn't ignore these short texts. We must ask, what *does* appear in them? And does it matter that these certain characteristics appear in a shortened text? What is the context and content of these shortened letters? Thus we can think about short texts both on their own terms and relative to another text by the same author, as well as think about them more broadly within the context of an author's entire surviving corpus compared to another's.

A final note concerns potential mathematical modeling of these texts and their relations to one another. Due to the robustness of the data, the generation of metrics of similarity/difference is certainly possible through various statistical tools such as cluster analysis. However, given the expected background of my readership I have chosen to forgo providing such metrics here. It is my assumption that scholars of the ancient world will find it easier to follow an argument based on reference lists and narrative analyses instead of cluster analysis, mean deviations, lines of best fit, and various forms of plotting, such as contour plotting. That said, basic visualizations for comparison, such as graphs and comparative trend lines, are provided that clearly present my case and allow easy identification of trends at a glance.

The Data: A Brief Discussion

Paul

I will start by pointing out trends in the Pauline data before moving onto a discussion of other authors, and then attempt to map these sets of data and their attendant trends onto one another to find similarities and differences.

The first thing that stands out among the Pauline letters is the close overlap in the percentages of universal claims/assertions and appeals to authority. As I noted above, this overlap is not entirely unexpected, as Paul often seeks authority by making divine claims, or has divine claims buttress his own stated positions. One can easily note on the spreadsheets, however, that the overlaps are far from one to one. Nonetheless, the similar percentages across the Pauline letters tell us that both of these characteristics were important to Paul, occurring for the most part above 10%. Universal claims/assertions appear 6–18% of the time, excluding *Philemon* where there is not a single occurrence, and are especially present in *Romans* and *Galatians*.

As for appeals to authority, the range is 5–44%, though we should probably discard the 44% of *Philemon* due to its small sample size. Our next highest number appears in both 2 *Corinthians*⁵ and 2 *Thessalonians* at 18%.⁶ Paul appears fairly consistent in his use of this characteristic, typically hovering around 12%, with a notably small number in 1 *Thessalonians* and possibly also 2 *Thessalonians* and *Philemon*.

Paul's use of both conversation and *prosōpopoiia/éthopoiia* appears in small but consistent measure in his letters. While his use of *prosōpopoiia/éthopoiia*

5 Whether or not 2 Cor was originally a single letter or a composite letter has obvious ramifications for my relative percentages. Though I lean toward the disunity of 2 Cor (divided between chapters 1–9 and 10–13), the evidence is not definitive and there are plausible arguments on both sides. Instead of analyzing hypothetical letters-within-letters, therefore, I have chosen, for the purposes of the present analysis, to treat 2 Cor as a single, unified letter, acknowledging the significance of this issue within Pauline studies and the ramifications for the disunity of this letter for my conclusions regarding the letter. As is the case with 2 Thess in the below note, if the reader disagrees with the inclusion of the letter in this form and thus my conclusions regarding it, it is my hope that the rest of my analysis of Paul's other letters nonetheless retains some utility for an understanding of Paul, Paul's letters, and other texts within this same sphere.

6 I reckon 2 Thess as an authentic Pauline letter, following Malherbe: A.J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004 [2000]). Realizing, however, that this is a point of dispute among Pauline scholars, I will add that the reader is welcome to skip over my discussions of 2 Thess with little loss to my overall project's goals as well as specific points about other Pauline letters and texts within the same sphere.

has been well documented, in *Romans* especially, it doesn't appear to play a huge role elsewhere. While other texts and authors (see below) use conversation much more prominently, I think the different contextual composition of Paul relative to, say, Epictetus can explain the discrepancy in the importance of this feature: Paul was at a geographic remove from his audience while Epictetus seems to have been looking them literally in the eye.

The next feature, rhetorical questions, provides another point of departure. In some letters—such as *Romans*, *1* and *2 Corinthians*, and *Galatians*—Paul uses this feature often, accounting for 8–10% of his features. In other letters, by contrast, this feature appears hardly if at all. However, we must take note of the fact that rhetorical questions, even where not prominent, do in fact appear (save in *Philemon*). It was clearly something that made its way into almost all Paul's letters, and thus was apparently important to his style. It will be important to discuss why a feature such as this is prominent in some letters while not in others, and how this trend might relate to other clusters of characteristics.

Paul's use of metaphors/analogies is likewise inconsistent. While present in most of the letters, it is notably present in *1 Thessalonians*, *2 Corinthians*, and to a lesser extent *1 Corinthians* and *Galatians*. In other cases it is present only barely (*Romans*) or not at all (*2 Thessalonians*, *Philippians*, *Philemon*).

The use of imperatives has an even wider range. It appears substantially in some letters (*Philippians*, *2 Thessalonians*), in moderate amounts in other letters (*1* and *2 Corinthians*) while very little in others (*Romans*).

Having some structural overlaps with imperatives, exhortation seems a fairly common characteristic with some, but not substantial, variance, ranging from 4–27%. Minus the two outliers due to their expansive range and short text (*Philemon*, *2 Thessalonians*), the range seems to be anywhere from 5–15%. While a non-trivial range, this is nothing extraordinary. A couple texts are notable for a high amount of exhortation, including *1 Corinthians*, *Galatians*, *1 Thessalonians*, and *Philippians*. It is also one of only two characteristics (along with first person reflection) to unequivocally appear twice in *Philemon*.

Paul's use of caustic injunctions seems limited to *Galatians* and *1 Corinthians*. It will thus merit discussion of the specific context of these instances as well as the broader form and content of these particular letters.

Paul's use of pathos has a very interesting distribution amongst Paul's letters. *Romans* and *1 Corinthians*, two of the most expansive and complex letters that also contain the entire spectrum of characteristics, have notably few instances of pathos. Meanwhile, a couple other letters in particular contain large amounts of pathos: *2 Corinthians*, *1 Thessalonians*, and *Philippians*. Even the tiny *Philemon* contains a couple instances. As with rhetorical questions, it is important to recognize that despite pathos appearing only in small amounts

in certain letters, its universal appearance in Paul's surviving letters tips us off to its importance to his style. Furthermore, we can note at this point that these two universally-appearing traits do not seem to cluster together: rhetorical questions appear prominently in the two letters (*Romans*, *1 Corinthians*) in which pathos makes infrequent appearance.

Neither irony/satire nor hyperbole appear at a high rate in Paul. For the former, *2 Corinthians* provides the bulk of instances, and a low percentage of instances at that. For the latter, *2 Corinthians* and *Galatians* both feature hyperbole to a non-trivial degree, but on the whole it, too, is largely absent from the other letters. It will merit discussing both why it is present in these particular letters as well as where and to what extent it appears in texts of other authors.

The use of oppositions/choices is another feature with wide variance across Paul's letters. Save *Philemon*, it is present in all of the surviving Pauline material, and even where it occurs in a very small percentage (*Romans*, *1 Corinthians*) there are still a handful of instances. It seems, as with rhetorical questions and pathos, that this is a central feature of Paul's style. Certain texts in particular feature this characteristic prominently: *1* and *2 Thessalonians*, *Galatians*, and *Philippians*. Interestingly, as with pathos this characteristic occurs least in our two longest and most complex letters (*Romans*, *1 Corinthians*). It also shares with pathos notable occurrence in *Galatians* and *Philippians*.

Figurations of groupness is somewhat similar, showing a universal presence in Paul's letters but a wide range in percentage. It has a particularly low percentage in *1* and *2 Corinthians*, and an increasing number up to 18% in the other letters, though this may be high due to *2 Thessalonians'* range. It appears in all the letters, including *Philemon*, and we may conclude it speaks to one of Paul's most central concerns.

As to Paul's different forms of address, in all of his letters he moves back and forth from a plural inclusive to a second person address. Addressing his audience in either form is central to his letters, showing his literary endeavor to be a highly engaged and personal one. The two types of address, interestingly, stand in roughly equal proportion, showing Paul's ability both to distance himself from his audience and thus teach/exhort/chastise and to unify himself with his audience, at least rhetorically, in an attempt to assert authority and groupness.

First person reflection is another of the characteristics that appears across Paul's letters, and one that does so with some prominence, with an average around 5% (excluding *Philemon*, which notably does have 2–3 instances). It seems that Paul cannot get through a single letter without finding an opportunity to step back and personally reflect on the matter at hand, a distinct

assertion of the “I” that would be picked up in later commentators such as Augustine.

The next characteristic, analysis of questions/objections, demonstrates some variance. On the one hand, it is entirely absent from a couple letters (1 and 2 *Thessalonians*) that tend to possess widely dispersed Pauline characteristics. On the other hand, it does play a non-trivial role in several, but not all (1 *Corinthians*), of the lengthier letters, such as *Romans*, 2 *Corinthians*, and *Galatians*. This latter fact may itself explain this phenomenon, as it is the longer and more complex letters that involve Paul expanding upon points and thus responding to questions or objections.

If this point were entirely true, it should find support in Paul’s use of systematic argument. For the most part, it does, as this feature is mostly present in the lengthier letters: *Romans*, 1 and 2 *Corinthians*, and *Galatians*. Yet still there remains the mystery of the prominent appearance of systematic argument in 2 *Corinthians* while analysis of questions/objections occurs minimally. As with the letters that have minimal amounts of analysis of questions/objections, the natural overlay of systematic argument follows suit: 1 and 2 *Thessalonians* and *Philemon*. *Philippians* contains a small amount of each.

We are now at a point where it is possible to make a few conclusions about the shape of Paul’s letters based on these literary criteria. Several were of fundamental importance to Paul’s style and occur both widely and in relative abundance across his letters: universal claims/assertions, appeals to authority, exhortation, rhetorical questions, pathos, oppositions/choices, figurations of groupness, first person reflection, and both plural inclusive and second person addresses, and systematic argument.

Other features appear prominently in some of Paul’s letters, but not in others, leading to the conclusion that they are not central to Paul’s style, and perhaps more dependent on context: imperatives, caustic injunction, analysis of questions/objections, and systematic argument. Some of the features in the above paragraph that universally appear to a notable degree can also vary substantially in the amount they appear from letter to letter: rhetorical questions, pathos, oppositions/choices, and figurations of groupness.

Other features appear to a significantly lesser extent in Paul’s letters, mostly those with a specifically rhetorical bent: *prosópopoiia*/*éthopoiia*, conversation, metaphors/analogies, irony/satire, and hyperbole. Interestingly, several of these are features that we find championed in ancient rhetorical theory. The fact that they appear in Paul’s letters suggests that Paul had some knowledge or training with regard to rhetorical theory (be it formal or informal schooling, or learning on his own through handbooks and reading/listening widely

to others; I will return to this matter in my final chapter) or that these features were simply common in texts of Paul's time. It also does not have to be an either/or question, and my guess is both factors played a role, though to what relative extent we cannot be sure.

Now that we have a general sense of what Paul's letters look like based on the above criteria, we can move on to other authors for comparison. I will start with Epictetus.

Epictetus

The three texts of Epictetus are his *Discourses*, his *Manual* (alternatively termed the *Enchiridion*), and his *Fragments*, the discussion and bibliography for which I reviewed in chapters one and two. These three texts, if we consider Epictetus' fragments a coherent text, are very different creatures, and it should not surprise us if lengthy discourses contain a different distribution of features than a condensed manual. That said, there are a surprising amount of overlaps among these three works.

Several features have a very similar distribution across all three texts: metaphors/analogies, anecdotes/examples, exhortation, and oppositions/choices. One possible and obvious conclusion to draw is that this has occurred simply due to the fact that the *Manual* was distilled directly from the *Discourses*, and thus features that appear in the latter will undoubtedly pop up in the former. Yet there are several other features that appear in a large proportion in one but not the other, typically where the feature is prominent in the *Discourses*, but not in the *Manual*: universal claims/assertions and appeals to authority (notably both appear prominently in the *Fragments*), conversation, *prosópopoiia*/*éthopoiia*, rhetorical questions, caustic injunctions, irony/satire (also in the *Fragments*), plural address (also in the *Fragments*), first person reflection, analysis of questions/objections, and systematic argument.

These differences directly reflect the differences in type, content, and social purpose between the two texts. The *Discourses* is a much more polished work, aimed at persuading those listening or reading. Thus we find dialogic elements (e.g., rhetorical questions, analysis of questions/objections),⁷ rhetorical expansions (e.g., analysis of questions/objections, systematic argument), and rhetorical flourishes (e.g., irony/satire, caustic injunctions) much more in the *Discourses*, while the use of imperatives and a second person address is much more suited for a simple and direct work such as the *Manual*. Interestingly, in situations where the *Discourses* and the *Manual* diverge, the *Fragments* are typically on the side of the *Discourses*, a fact that seems to indicate that later

7 B. Wehner, *Die Funktion der Dialogstruktur in Epiktets Diatriben* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000).

authors who quoted Epictetus were more occupied with his *Discourses* than the truncated *Manual*. This would make sense in the case of universal claims/assertions and appeals to authority, both of which make for easy and useful quoting to later writers on matters such as religion, but the same case cannot be made for irony/satire and a plural address. It bears mentioning that neither of these features is particularly dialogical, which would make sense as later authors likely wouldn't quote expansive dialogue between Epictetus and a real or imagined interlocutor.

The features most common in these texts are clear: anecdotes/examples, exhortation, and oppositions/choices. Epictetus was obviously most interested in questions of ethics, namely what to do in certain situations, how others handled themselves, and how his audience should go about their lives. We can already see some overlaps with Paul, who likewise prominently deployed anecdotes/examples, exhortation, and oppositions/choices.

The features of least importance to Epictetus are also clear: metaphors/analogies, pathos, hyperbole, and perhaps first person reflection. This is a bit different from Paul, as Epictetus as a person rarely enters the picture, a fact that is perhaps a little strange for a scholast in a world where demonstrating virtue by personal example was standard. Then again, Paul's use of first person reflection occurs at a frequency not far from Epictetus', particularly in the latter's *Discourses*. Paul's personal story is seemingly more important to his activity and his audience than Epictetus' is for him, the latter of whom was lecturing from a position of semi-official authority as the head of a class and whose audience came to him due to an awareness and respect of his position. Epictetus and Paul do share a lack of concern with hyperbole and metaphors/analogies, the former a rhetorical tactic somewhat rare in both, and the latter a tactic that is deployed across these two authors, but used infrequently.

Philodemus

Philodemus produced a wide range of texts on several different topics. As I noted above, though the occasionally fragmented nature of some of Philodemus' material might disproportionately influence the percentages of certain characteristics, overall the relative occurrence of other features will still provide descriptive force.

There are several features with a fairly consistent distribution across Philodemus' texts, though the percentage range here seems to be higher than for Paul and Epictetus: appeals to authority, anecdotes/examples, oppositions/choices, figurations of groupness, plural addresses, and a systematic argument. It is important to note that, unlike Paul's or Epictetus' texts, several of these features do have outliers, for example *On Piety* for anecdotes/examples,

On Rhetoric for oppositions/choices, and *On Frank Speech* for systematic argument. Nonetheless, the general prevalence of these features indicates their importance for Philodemus' style on the whole.

Philodemus writes in an instructive way, turning to authorities (appeals to authority, usually Epicurus himself) as well as examples (anecdotes/examples) and logic (systematic argument) to make his point, all of which we find in Paul and Epictetus, albeit to varying degrees. Unlike Paul and Epictetus, Philodemus is less concerned with pragmatic questions of action in the social sphere, hence the lack of explicit exhortation. His concern with his audience believing the right thing for the right reason puts him directly alongside Paul and Epictetus in his figurations of groupness, plural addresses, and appeals to authority, though he shows a markedly lesser concern with universal claims/assertions.

Certain features occur rarely, if at all, in Philodemus: conversation, *prosópopoiia/éthopoiia*, rhetorical questions, imperatives, exhortation, caustic injunctions, pathos, irony/satire, hyperbole, and second person addresses. Similar to Epictetus, Philodemus seems to lack certain dialogic features, perhaps simply reflecting his individual literary style, though perhaps also a product of his compositional context which may have been at greater remove from his audience compared to Paul and Epictetus, a point to which I will return. He has few rhetorical flourishes or expansions, and rarely involves himself directly though he does frequently align himself with his audience. Several of these rarely appearing features put Philodemus right alongside Epictetus and Paul in his infrequent use of metaphors/analogies and hyperbole, and alongside Epictetus in his comparative lack of pathos and first person reflection. Philodemus stands out most of all in his comparative lack of second person addresses, his rare use of rhetorical questions (apart from *On Death* and *On Rhetoric*), and the notable dearth of explicit exhortation.

Control Documents: Aelius Aristides' *Panathenaic Oration*, the *Damascus Document*, and Other Pauline Comparanda

Introduction

I have to this point argued that Paul's letters have many and significant similarities in form, content, and purpose with a larger socio-literary sphere present in the ancient Mediterranean, specifically with certain works in that sphere written by Philodemus (*On Piety*; *On Death*) and Epictetus (the *Discourses*) that well illustrate elements of form and content that define this sphere. These

similarities took the form of similar frequencies of certain literary characteristics that I identified characteristics that I believe largely define the literary shape (comprising both form and content) of each work.

A comparison, however, is largely useless without a control. A control is something that is also compared to the thing in question in order to establish the fact that the other things being compared are in some sense different. It is the part of the experiment (here the comparison) that does not involve the variable (here the variable would be criteria-categorization within this particular socio-literary sphere). Most familiar to us from the scientific method, controls are used to help verify experimental findings (similarities between texts in a given sphere) by providing a clear departure point (literature not in my newly-theorized sphere) for the thing(s) in question (here, primarily Paul's letters). The same method is used with the control that is used with the other elements in comparison to show that the same method yields different results for different comparanda, thus allowing for description and explanation of this difference. A control can be positive (an expected correlation with another thing) or negative (an expected non-correlation with another thing), and is necessary if a comparison is to be properly situated within its broader context. A control allows our comparison to say not only that certain things have similarities, but also crucially that these similarities are significant because they are not shared universally.

In the present case, having controls will be necessary to demonstrate that the overlaps that I'm positing between Paul's letters and other texts I place in the same sphere do not exist with other texts outside this sphere. If we can identify texts outside this sphere whose shape (form and content) is different from Paul's letters and certain works by Philodemus and Epictetus, this finding will have several consequences: it will provide additional support for the creation of my theorized spheres, in particular for defining these spheres according to their form; it will lend additional weight to the importance of the socio-literary overlaps I'm positing between Paul's letters and these other works; and it will show that Paul's letters are best compared to works I've identified as sharing this sphere instead of other works outside it.

This last point in particular is an important one. Paul has been compared to a host of different kinds of literature and thinkers in the ancient world. I argued in the beginning of this study that much work of this kind has compared Paul to the wrong types of writers/thinkers, and compared his letters with the wrong types of literature. This brings us back, in other words, to my two main research questions: 1) What kind of texts were Paul's letters?, and 2) What kind of writer was Paul? Most previous Pauline comparisons, I argued,

have not satisfactorily answered these questions, and have not done so because they were comparing the wrong things and/or comparing in a non-productive (non-transparent, non-testable) way.

We can use texts and writers with which Paul and his letters have been compared in the past, wrongfully in my mind, as controls to compare with my own findings. If I can show that these other works around Paul's time, works that are often likened to Paul's letters, differ markedly in form (and by extension content and purpose) from Paul's letters and other works within this sphere, this fact will provide substantial evidence that these are not the proper comparanda for Paul's letters. This finding would also lend additional weight to my argument about which texts share the same sphere.

Although I define socio-literary spheres based on form, content, and social purpose (which is tied to the social location of the author), my analysis of controls below largely focuses on form, only forwarding some general comments with respect to content. The reasons for this are two-fold. First, the matter of content is a lengthy, dense, and extremely complex subject. Scholars have argued at length about the content of Paul's thought, and a proper survey and treatment of the dominant strands of categorizing Paul's thought cannot be attempted here for reasons of space. I will say, however, that I am largely not persuaded by work that has attempted to characterize Paul's thought along certain lines that remain influential in Pauline scholarship: as high rhetoric, as apocalyptic, as mystery religion, as Jewish or Hellenic.⁸ Even Greco-Roman philosophy,⁹ a line of characterization that has, particularly recently, added important insights to understanding certain Pauline concepts, cannot account for Pauline thought in its entirety.¹⁰ This fact should be unsurprising: very few thinkers generate a written corpus that completely hews to a particular intellectual system. Those that do tend to go about the matter rather explicitly—one can think here of certain philosophers or religious thinkers in particular socio-intellectual lineages¹¹—which seems to be quite far from what we have

8 Both categories that I problematize early in my study as essentialized and possessing little useful explanatory power when thinking about Paul in a wider socio-literary milieu. Central to my argument here is that we need ways to categorize and compare Paul that cut across these problematic categories.

9 And allied spheres of thought such as medicine, physiognomy, physiology, etc.

10 E.g., Engberg-Pedersen's 2010 book, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul*, is explicit that it seeks such an explanatory framework for only certain of Pauline passages; Dale Martin's 1995 book similarly narrows its Pauline field to certain passages and sections: D.B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

11 Though both Epictetus and Philodemus are typically described as belonging to specific philosophical schools (Stoicism and Epicureanism, respectively), each departs from these

in Paul, a religious specialist basing his authority off of his own powers of miraculous action and *pneuma*-interpretation. In sum, Pauline comparisons based on matters of content tend to be based on essentialized categories that fail to sufficiently explain Paul's own complex thought in a wider, nuanced, multifarious context. The comparison of categories based on content remains a subjective endeavor, with scholars arguing fruitlessly about whether Paul's content looks or seems to them to be Jewish, Hellenic, rhetorical, philosophical, apocalyptic, and so forth.

This last point leads directly to the second reason I am focusing here on form more than content, namely that the study of form, especially as I am executing it in this study, can be undertaken in an empirical fashion more widely generalizable than the study of content. This is not to say studies of content cannot be empirical; certain recent works demonstrate through methodical and precise comparisons that certain ideas from Paul's letters find close analogues in other Greco-Roman texts, and that these analogues provide descriptive and explanatory power for our understanding of Paul.¹² These works, however, carefully circumscribe their objects of study to certain passages and ideas, even if the authors suspect that the conceptual parallels and influences likely run deeper.

My project here is different, as it seeks an empirical comparison much more widely cast, looking at the overall form of different texts in light of similar socio-literary qualities. However, my work here is highly compatible with the work of these other scholars, as I show how certain types of authors with a certain type of education in the ancient Mediterranean freely drew from other intellectual systems and socio-literary currents in the formulation of their own ideas. Authors like Philodemus and Epictetus cannot be perfectly categorized according to specific intellectual and literary systems; the same can be said for Paul. Indeed, it is telling that classicists rarely attempt such totalizing descriptions of the objects of their study as biblical scholars do for Paul.

I have selected two specific controls that represent two separate conceptual categories in which scholarship often places Paul's letters. The first is Aelius Aristides' *Panathenaic Oration*, embodying the aristocratic-classicizing, advanced-rhetorical type of education and literature that we find exemplified in Demosthenes and Isocrates and that continues to reflect a particular

categorizations in different ways: Epictetus, in his generalized virtue-ethics with Socratic influence, and Philodemus, in his notable work on rhetoric and poetry that departed from the typical Epicurean eschewing of those subjects.

- 12 E.g.: Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul* (2010); Wasserman, *The Death of the Soul in Romans 7* (2008); C.E. Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

aristocratic-rhetorical ideal well into the Byzantine era. In my delineation of different socio-literary spheres at the beginning of this study, I identified this type of literature as constituting its own socio-literary sphere, characterized more by its interest in personal showmanship and aristocratic, social positioning than in the cosmological claims and ethical matters that defined Paul's sphere.

Although some scholars have recently focused on disproving the notion that we can think of Paul's letters as examples of advanced rhetoric (e.g., R. Dean Anderson), the idea persists in Pauline commentaries (e.g., Ben Witherington III), as outlined in chapter one. By showing that the form of Paul's letters differs markedly from something like Aristides' *Panathenaic Oration*, we provide evidence that Paul's letters should not be conceived along these types of rhetorical lines, and we also suggest that Paul's education and social standing may well have differed from someone like Aristides. I will return to the issue of social standing and education in my last chapter, and the reader may also recall chapter one, where I argued for the prevalence of types of education different than the advanced rhetorical training of someone like Aristides.

The second control document is the *Damascus Document*, representing a type of "Jewish" literature with "sectarian" and "apocalyptic" features¹³ that some scholars believe effectively parallels and contextualizes Paul's letters.¹⁴ Unlike the scholarship on Greco-Roman rhetorical theorists vis-à-vis Paul's letters that particularly focuses on form and the letters' organization, scholarship primarily interpreting Paul's letters as "Jewish apocalyptic" largely stems from two sources: the conceptualization of Paul as a Jew based on his own claims and thus the perceived need to find other Jewish socio-religious documents written around Paul's time; and the attempt to liken Paul's apocalyptic comments to those found in so-called "apocalyptic communities" such as excavated at Qumran. Like Jesus,¹⁵ and a host of other historical and/or religious figures for that matter, Paul tends to be understood in ways that confirm modern scholars' own biases and affiliations. The use of empirical methods in comparisons that are transparent and testable, as I offer for my literary sphere and my controls both, can help mitigate these inherent biases in our own work.

13 J.J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 2007) 9–11, 152–155.

14 E.g., the essays in J. Murphy-O'Connor and J.H. Charlesworth, eds., *Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990); see also J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul and Qumran: Studies in New Testament Exegesis* (London; Dublin: G. Chapman, 1968), and J.D.G. Dunn, "4QMMT and Galatians," *NTS* 43.1 (1997) 147–153.

15 W.E. Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus: Historical Scholarship, Judaism, and the Construction of Contemporary Identity* (London; Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2005).

I must note, however, that I am by no means seeking to dispute the fact that Paul thought of himself as a Jew/Judaeen or that certain elements of his letters seem to be expecting the end-times to be imminent.¹⁶ I merely question the utility of such facts for situating and explaining the form of Paul's letters in his wider ancient Mediterranean milieu. Jews were widely present across the ancient Mediterranean and many spoke and wrote in Greek. Many religious figures spoke of the decay of civilization and its end in the near future. None of this changes the fact that Paul's letters find their closest analogues in form, content, and purpose in certain other contemporary ethical-philosophical works. I am also certainly not arguing that Paul is best understood by jettisoning a study of comparative Jewish practice or texts read amongst Jewish groups in Paul's day. The more contemporary practices and texts we can bring to bear on the study of an individual writer the better we will understand them and their writings.

Nonetheless, I must repeat that I find certain of these conceptual categories of content (Jewish, apocalyptic, sectarian, etc.) to be essentialized and provide little explanatory power for Paul's own form and content.¹⁷ As I have noted at several points, my interest lies in the utility of comparative, textually-descriptive tools that can cut across problematic categories such as Jewish, apocalyptic, sectarian, and so forth. By categorizing Paul's letters only as Jewish and/or apocalyptic, we cannot provide the same cross-Mediterranean comparisons or forward positive suggestions regarding Paul's wider socio-literary milieu and education therein. I will begin with a discussion of Aristides before returning to further discussion of the *Damascus Document*. For reasons of space and a desire to remain focused on the relative densities of my textual criteria, I provide only limited introduction and analysis of these and other textual comparanda, all of which could easily merit longer treatment.

16 Indeed, I reckon 2 Thess to be part of the authentic Pauline corpus and believe its exclusion stems in large part from Christian-apologetic concerns that its content is too heavy on the theme of imminent end-times.

17 Other conceptual categories in the study of early Christianity are likewise fraught, e.g. Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, Judeo-Christian, Hellenistic Judaism, and the many socio-religious movements associated with specific thinkers, e.g. Valentinianism and Marcionism, whose integrity as "heretical" social and intellectual systems derives from later polemicists such as Irenaeus and Eusebius. Indeed, the categorization of 'orthodox versus heretical' is highly anachronistic and reinscribes certain early polemics into our own study of history. The field of historical-biblical studies has increasingly recognized the complexity of this reality on the ground and is starting to move away from such problematic categories, though the influence of these categories remains substantial, widespread, and often implicit.

Aelius Aristides' Panathenaic Oration

Aelius Aristides is a prime example of the type of aristocratic, classicizing, advanced-educated rhetor whose writings, the bulk of which are orations, exemplify that particular socio-literary sphere.¹⁸ He was born in the early second century CE in Mysia, in the eastern Roman Empire in what is now Turkey, and came from a wealthy family situated in the upper echelon of that region's economic and political life. He received the best education available, following the typical Greco-Roman aristocrat-rhetor's course of *paideia* by traveling the ancient Mediterranean to study under a variety of teachers and achieving facility in a host of subjects, including philosophy but most of all rhetoric. This type of rhetoric took its cue from the ancient Greek masters Isocrates and Demosthenes of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE respectively, and modern classicists rightfully emphasize the role of this extensive education, particularly the subject of rhetoric, in the formation of a constructed Greek and aristocratic identity.¹⁹

Aristides is the author of dozens of works still extant, a survival rate that reflects the high regard in which he was held subsequent his life. He is perhaps most famous for his *Sacred Tales*, an edited collection of his reflections on his own life's dogged illnesses and attempted convalescences in temples of healing. Typical for a Greco-Roman career aristocrat-orator, he also gave a series of orations during his travels, and they take typical form, emphasizing one's facility with Greco-Roman rhetorical theory, knowledge of mythology and history, and most of all brilliance in presentation (*ductus*), which manifested in, among other things, word-choice, diction, vigor of presentation, and comportment. The most famous of these speeches is probably the *Panathenaicus*,

18 Additional secondary sources relevant to Aristides' form, style, and self-reflexivity are provided in my bibliography, but for a basic outline of his life and writings a couple brief sketches can be found here: C.A. Behr, *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works. Volume I. Orations I–XVI*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986); P.W. van der Horst, *Aelius Aristides and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1980).

19 For a nuanced account of the general Greco-Roman milieu's negotiation with Greek identity and history, see D. Konstan and S. Said, eds., *Greeks on Greekness: Viewing the Greek Past Under the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philosophical Society, 2007). This point is also repeatedly emphasized by scholars of Greek education, specifically with reference to *paideia*, e.g. Cribiore, Morgan, and Too. This negotiation was particularly prominent in the Second Sophistic's affected, rhetorical classicism, and continued to animate aristocratic concern in late antiquity and well into the Byzantine era: A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

also known as the *Panathenaic Oration*, delivered to an audience in Rome in express imitation of Isocrates' own oration of the same name.

The *Panathenaicus* is the work that I have picked out for comparison with Paul's letters and their corresponding socio-literary sphere as a control document. It is what we would call a negative control, in other words something where, due to its different content and overall goals we would not expect substantial overlaps in a comparison of form. The *Panathenaicus* was written substantially after Paul's life, in the mid-second century CE. Despite this chronological separation between the two authors, Aristides' work is still tremendously useful for my comparisons, as it accurately reflects the rhetorical ideals of classical oratory, namely the aristocratic-classicizing type of work that defines its own socio-literary sphere and which existed before Paul's time and persisted long after.

I would also reiterate that the comparison between texts is a matter of more and less, as is any comparison. As I discussed in chapter three, the deployment of categories based on polythetic criteria instead of an essentialized core allows for a comparison both more nuanced and accurate as well as structures the comparison in a relative fashion. Which is to say, the question is not 'whether or not two things are similar or different' but rather 'how, where, and to what extent are two things similar and/or different'. As such, Aristides' *Panathenaicus*, as a paradigmatic, indeed intentionally self-aware, example of my rhetorical-aristocratic socio-literary sphere, will likely be more different (in number and/or extent of form divergences) from Paul's letters than perhaps other of Aristides' works that less attempt to mimic Isocrates. Ancient, elite education involved training authors to write in different styles, a fact that both again highlights the more/less element of our comparison and reminds us to stay focused on specific texts instead of authors in our comparisons and conclusions.

Given the size of the *Panathenaicus*, I have only analyzed part of the work, sections 1–48 from Behr's 1986 Brill edition. I am certainly aware of the potential dangers in only analyzing part of a work and then drawing broader conclusions, but I have limited my analysis of the *Panathenaicus* to these sections for several reasons. One, the section is large enough that I believe it to be a representative sample of the work as a whole. Two, the occurrences of characteristics are fairly equally dispersed across this section, and my own perusal of the remainder of the work confirms that this trend continues. Save for rare exceptions (e.g., exhortations overwhelmingly present in the latter part of *Romans*), this roughly equal dispersal of characteristics holds true for not only the *Panathenaicus* but also the works in my newly theorized sphere. This reflects the fact that a certain literary style tends to underpin works as a whole,

and therefore large variation of my second-order characteristics within any given work is rare. And three, there is simply no space to undertake a lengthy and specific analysis of the *Panathenaicus* as I have for the above texts from Paul, Philodemus, and Epictetus. Especially as a control, it will suffice to analyze enough of the *Panathenaicus* to clearly demonstrate it is of a different kind than the texts in my newly theorized sphere containing Paul's letters, Epictetus' *Discourses*, and Philodemus *On Piety* and *On Death*.

The best way to compare the form of the *Panathenaicus* and the texts in Paul's sphere is simply by noting broader trends in frequencies and relative frequencies of characteristics, and I again refer the reader to my appendices for my complete textual findings. The first thing that jumps out is the huge amount of universal claims, more than doubling the frequency found in almost every text in Paul's sphere. Furthermore, this is coupled with a very low frequency of appeals to authority. By contrast, appeals and claims in Paul's sphere usually appear at roughly the same frequency, and texts in which appeals are low (*Discourses*; *Enchiridion*; *On Death*) have a low frequency of claims as well (1 *Thessalonians* is a slight outlier here with appeals lower than claims to a small but notable degree).

The *Panathenaicus* also contains a disproportionately large amount of metaphors/analogies, again more than doubling its frequency in nearly every text in Paul's sphere. The same is also largely true of anecdotes/examples, with the *Panathenaicus* dwarfing all of Paul's letters and finding some parallel only in Philodemus' *On Death*. Imperatives and exhortations, meanwhile, consistently appearing though not to a huge degree in Paul and Epictetus, are practically absent from the *Panathenaicus*, a fact also true of Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*. Oppositions/Choices and groupness, both widely present across Paul's sphere, also occur in the *Panathenaicus*, though the latter is on the lower end with respect to both, particularly compared to Paul's shorter letters.

The different addresses, second person and plural inclusive, are both generally in line with what we see in this sphere, but we find a final set of clear divergences among my last three criteria. First person reflections occur in the *Panathenaicus* far more than any text in Paul's sphere, matched perhaps only by *Philemon* and its tiny sample size. We find the analysis of questions/objections practically absent in the *Panathenaicus*, while it is fairly consistently present across Paul's sphere, albeit to a low degree. And finally, the *Panathenaicus* contains a disproportionately high frequency of systematic structure, double what we find in Paul and Epictetus but aligning closely with Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*.

Assuming we can generalize to the work as a whole, we can see that the *Panathenaicus* substantially diverges in a number of ways from texts in Paul's

sphere. Within the sphere itself there are works that diverge, occasionally substantially, from others. This is not surprising, given small differences in individual authors' styles, contents, and compositional contexts such as perceived audience. Indeed, we see a few characteristics where Philodemus' two works in this sphere more closely aligned with the *Panathenaicus* than with Paul and Epictetus (imperatives, exhortations, systematic structure). But on the whole, it is clear that the shape of the *Panathenaicus* is significantly different from the texts in my newly theorized sphere, with hugely divergent frequencies and relative frequencies of characteristics.

As I occasionally touched on in my comparisons of Paul's letters and other texts in this sphere, we can look for explanations for differences in frequencies and relative frequencies in the content and purpose of respective works. I would suggest for instance, that Paul's shorter letters involved more exhortations and less systematic structure than Paul's longer letters because the shorter letters reflected a situation in which Paul mostly perceived his addressees to be already convinced of his authority and broader argument, and as a result focused more on officiating in the realm of behavior. For the *Panathenaicus*, I think we can similarly suggest explanations for divergences in form based on the different content and purpose of its sphere relative to the sphere that defined Paul's letters and certain works of Philodemus and Epictetus.

The *Panathenaicus'* sphere is concerned with showmanship and the presentation of grand-sounding ideas. Thus we find large amounts of sweeping claims, such as about the gods and their relation to the geography, city, and people of Greece. These ideas are developed and expanded, prime opportunities for systematic structure, as Aristides embellishes and expands at length. But his concern is not rational proof per se, and hence we find very few appeals to authority.

Framing his speech in myth and history, Aristides is little concerned with naming specific leaders or treating specific social matters. Thus we find his concern with rhetorical embellishment manifesting in huge amounts of metaphors/analogies. The lack of concrete concern with his audience and their social situation manifests in large numbers of sweeping claims but small amounts of exhortation. Aristides is not trying to modify his addressees' behavior in the least, in other words. Instead, most important for Aristides and his literary sphere is self-aggrandizement, seen in the massive amount of first person reflection. Aristides rarely passes up a chance to provide a first-person aside, foregrounding his own opinions and ruminations on the nature of the gods' relationship with Greece.

There is much more that could be said here, like comparing exactly how certain characteristics cluster together in the *Panathenaicus* relative to Paul's

literary sphere, such as the shift between addressees. Furthermore, certain conceptual and structural commonalities do exist, such as foregrounding the implicit authority of the gods, assuming the tie between the audience and the gods, and moving back and forth between wider claims and narrative. As a thinker in the ancient Mediterranean, Aristides shared with most other contemporaries the same general understanding of the gods as interested parties in human activity (but note the Epicurean divergence on this point). Aristides also shared with other writers membership among the elite few in the ancient Mediterranean capable of writing an eloquent text of any length, constituting perhaps just 2% of all people.²⁰ Yet the differences in the content, purpose, and especially the form between the *Panathenaicus* and works such as Paul's letters are several, substantial, clear, and reaffirm the boundaries that I've theorized between these different socio-literary spheres.

Damascus Document

The *Damascus Document* is one of many works that comprise the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), a trove of manuscripts in several languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) containing texts from the Hebrew Bible and so-called extra-biblical literature. Discovered in the middle of the twentieth century at Qumran, in what is now the West Bank, they date to roughly the first century BCE.²¹ The *Damascus Document* is especially notable for existing in manuscripts other than those found at Qumran, and its current form is an edited composite of texts from Qumran and Cairo Geniza, another trove of documents found in Old Cairo.

The *Damascus Document* does not exist in Greek, and as such any comparison with the form of something like Paul's letters must take this into account. Similar literary forms could and did exist across different languages; ancient evidence of, and studies on, bilingualism and multilingualism have shown that

20 This figure and related questions of education, literacy, etc. are treated extensively in chapters one and five.

21 The bibliography on the DSS is enormous. A few starting points oriented around the *Damascus Document* in particular: J.M. Baumgarten, E.G. Chazon, and A. Pinnick, eds., *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery: Proceedings of the Third International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 4–8 February, 1998* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000); M. Broshi, ed., *The Damascus Document Reconsidered* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society; Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, 1992); P.R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the "Damascus Document"* (Sheffield, England: JSOP Press, 1983, c1982); L. Rost, *Die Damaskusschrift* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1933); G. Vermes, *An Introduction to the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1999).

many writers imported formal and grammatical stylings from one language into another despite apparent difficulties in such a transplantation.²² We see close similarities, for example, between Seneca's *Natural Questions* (in Latin) and the texts in Paul's sphere (in Greek), showing how overlaps could widely occur despite differing languages. In other words, if the form of the *Damascus Document* strongly diverges from what we find in Paul's letters and other texts within his sphere, this is an additional piece of evidence that Paul's writings did not draw from a text like the *Damascus Document*, regardless of the difference in language.

As with Aristides' *Panathenaicus*, the *Damascus Document* is here used as a representative sample of a broader type of literature that encompasses the Dead Sea Scrolls and those texts concerned with constructing group boundaries and/or treating end-times, such as the *Community Rule*, *War Scroll*, *Rule of the Blessing*, and *1 Enoch*. We could easily include more texts within this grouping, and these texts vary relative to one another in myriad ways. At issue here is the comparison of texts like Paul's letters to a text whose content is thought to exemplify certain traits that scholars have variously labeled "Jewishness," "sectarianism," and "apocalypticism." One of my core arguments throughout this study has been that form in many ways matches content, and therefore if Paul's letters closely map conceptually onto types of literature like the *Damascus Document* then there should follow certain similarities in form.

My argument does not preclude other conceptual types or literary forms of influence on Paul's thought or writing style. Indeed, the Dead Sea Scroll texts *should* be thoroughly plumbed and compared with writings like Paul's letters on the basis of both conceptual content and literary form. But if we can show, as I do below, that something like the *Damascus Document* substantially differs from Paul's letters relative to other works that I've argued share Paul's socio-literary sphere, these findings would lend substantial weight to the argument that Paul's letters are of a type shared with others in my theorized sphere and

22 The best starting points for the subject are A. Mullen and Patrick James, eds., *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); J.N. Adams, M. Janse, and S. Swain, eds., *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and J.N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Adams' latter work makes explicit the point that language can often do the work of group construction, a widely-recognized point in sociology and anthropology, and one that further supports my argument that a particular socio-literary sphere's shape (form and content) relates to its social purposes, including group construction. As I mentioned in my notes to chapter one, the account I present here is generally shared among certain classicists, e.g. Harris, Bagnall, and Bubenik.

not of a type with texts such as the *Damascus Document* and other similar texts such as those of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In other words, such findings would be a corrective on the view that we should view Paul's letters primarily through the lenses of Jewish writing, apocalypticism, and/or sectarianism.

I turn now to a comparison of the form of the *Damascus Document* with the texts in Paul's socio-literary sphere. As with the *Panathenaicus*, the best way to do so will be to compare the frequencies and relative frequencies of characteristics in the *Damascus Document* relative to the texts in Paul's sphere. On the whole, although the *Damascus Document* looks closer to Paul's letters and other texts in that sphere than the *Panathenaicus* (itself a notable finding), it still contains sufficient differences to conclude that it is a type of text apart from Paul's letters and other texts in that sphere.

The clearest alignment of the *Damascus Document* with Paul's sphere is in universal claims and appeals to authority, both of which match almost exactly the percentages we find in *Romans* and align well with other of Paul's letters though less closely with Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*. Like the *Panathenaicus*, the *Damascus Document* has an increased level of anecdotes/examples relative to Paul's letters but which aligns fairly closely with the texts of Epictetus and Philodemus. Exhortation, meanwhile, occurs in the *Damascus Document* at a rate close to what we find in Paul's letters and Epictetus' *Discourses* but which departs markedly from Philodemus' two texts. The *Damascus Document's* oppositions/choices and figurations of groupness both exist within the bounds of Paul's sphere, albeit on the high end, though the variance of these criteria internal to Paul's sphere does not make this point especially telling. We can already see that the *Damascus Document* is substantially closer to Paul's letters and other texts in his sphere than the *Panathenaicus*, particularly around the matter of broader assertions, constructing authority for those claims (indeed, like Paul, the *Damascus Document* uses Scripture for its appeals to authority), and asserting groupness based around stark differences in behavioral choices.

Where we find a fundamental departure of the *Damascus Document* from the sphere containing Paul's letters is on the matter of addresses, specifically second person addresses, plural inclusive addresses, and first person reflections. In Paul's letters and other texts of that sphere the relation between different addresses and other characteristics is fundamental, especially regarding the issues of ethical behavior, authority, and group construction. Paul's sphere, for instance, often ties appeals to authority to first person reflections, creating parallel authority claims for further exhortations and claims. Paul's sphere also often contains the shift between the second person and plural inclusive

addresses, whose interrelation is fundamentally tied to figurations of groupness, oppositions, and exhortation, where the authors can censure divergent opinion and behavior while aligning themselves with ideal claims and those among their audience whose claims and behavior align with their own.

As was the case with the *Panathenaicus*, specific points of departure between different spheres can be explained by comparing the different contents and purposes of these different spheres. For the *Panathenaicus*, we saw that the mythical-historical content and the purpose directed toward aristocratic self-aggrandizement led to a high frequency of claims without appeals to authority and a high frequency of first person reflection without exhortation, respectively. For the *Damascus Document*, the role of the author is completely removed from claims, appeals to authority, and exhortations. The content is more focused on the community's organization and the purpose is to support certain organizational and behavioral principles based on biblical authority. References to the author and the audience are nowhere to be found. Central to the sphere containing Paul's letters was the importance of the author's individual authority: the attempted linking of authorial authority with other forms of authority like sacred texts, subsequent linkages to claims and behavioral guidance based on that authority, and the defense of that authority relative to other authority claimants (real or imagined).

The ongoing, contested nature of this authority in Paul's sphere also manifests in other characteristics, such as analysis of questions/objections, and occasionally dialogic characteristics such as conversation/personification and rhetorical questions that highlight the presence of the speaker and audience. Other characteristics emphasizing an emotive contestation for authority also occasionally appear in Paul's sphere (pathos, hyperbole, irony/satire) while being entirely absent in the *Damascus Document*. The purpose of texts in Paul's field, in other words, was partly to bolster the authority of the author, and by extension also bolster the author's attempted group constructions and ethical prescriptions tied to their own claims. Texts such as the *Damascus Document*, however, take the form of a more abstract treatise due to their purpose being more directed at explicating and defending broader, communal prescriptions divorced from the authority of any one person.

Figures like Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus were a certain brand of knowledge-specialist whose abstract claims manifested themselves in the practical realm of behavior and ethics based on the author's personal authority. The author of the *Damascus Document*, by contrast, was likely no innovative religious specialist but rather sought to strengthen certain social-communal ties. Epictetus, Paul, and Philodemus wanted to place themselves as foremost

authorities in the minds of their readers; by contrast, and admittedly a bit of a simplification, the author of the *Damascus Document* wanted to place the conservative communal power structure as foremost in the minds of their readers. Such differences between the two spheres manifested themselves in not only the differing purposes of the respective works within each sphere but in their form and content as well.

Conclusions

It was my leading contention of this section that only by comparing texts across different spheres would we be able to confirm the reality and importance of close similarities within a given, theorized sphere. I likened this process to seeking a control in comparison, and it is no coincidence that controls are used in the scientific method, which seeks empirical, testable results, just as I do here. It is not enough, in other words, to theorize a grouping of texts by saying that the texts in this hypothetical grouping look similar, even if the positive evidence for making such a claim is strong. One must also show that other texts outside this grouping do not share the same level(s) of similarity. Obviously different texts outside this sphere will be closer or farther apart from this theorized grouping, and we find this to be the case here, with the *Panathenaicus* showing more divergences in its distribution of characteristics relative to Paul's sphere than the *Damascus Document*. Both the *Panathenaicus* and the *Damascus Document*, however, depart in (different) marked ways from the texts in Paul's sphere, containing frequencies of characteristics substantially different from what we consistently find in Paul's sphere and/or completely lacking characteristics consistently present in Paul's sphere.

The selection of these two particular texts as controls also had an additional goal, as each text represented a particular strand of literature to which Paul's letters are often likened or through whose conceptual lenses Paul's letters are often read. Aristides' *Panathenaicus* represented socially elite, classicizing oratory, whose rhetorical prescriptions are often read into Paul's letters in a way that I (along with many others) have argued provides little payoff in terms of description or explanation. My analysis above has shown that Paul's letters are of a different kind than works like the *Panathenaicus*, and that they each stand within a different socio-literary sphere. Their differing form, content, and purpose also suggest differences in their respective author's social position, education, and broader social practices. Those in Aristides' sphere were overwhelmingly of a certain type: aristocratic, highly educated according to

advanced rhetorical theory, and classicizing in their approach to literature and possibly also identity construction. Similarly, as I will show in my final chapter and which I suggested in chapter two, we can draw links between Paul's participation in his particular socio-literary sphere and his social standing, education, and purpose.

The *Damascus Document*, meanwhile, was selected to represent texts that personify (problematic) characteristics such as Jewish, apocalyptic, and sectarian. Paul is read by some scholars as an apocalyptic, sectarian Jew, and in some senses he may well have been. Yet a comparison of the texts in Paul's sphere with works like the *Damascus Document* reveal that Paul's writings are closer to texts like Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Death* than they are to so-called Jewish, apocalyptic, sectarian literature. Other examples of works that are likened to Paul's letters but that contain fundamental divergences in form—and I would argue also content and purpose—can be multiplied, and I suggested a few above: *Community Rule*, *War Scroll*, *Rule of the Blessing*, and *1 Enoch*. The author(s) of something like the *Damascus Document*, the evidence suggests, was simply less like Paul in terms of social standing, education, and socio-literary practice than people like Philodemus and Epictetus.

I will return to the links between social standing, education, and socio-literary practice in my next chapter, to demonstrate the historical payoff for my textual analysis. Yet we can conclude here that the use of the *Panathenaicus* and the *Damascus Document* as controls has had a couple important results. First, it has added significance to the similarities found between texts in Paul's socio-literary sphere due to the fact that, by contrast, other texts likened to Paul's letters by some scholars markedly differ. This is the fundamental reason for using controls, and I believe they have well sufficed for that purpose here. Second, and related, my textual comparison has demonstrated that Paul's letters are best read and understood not by using as analogues certain types of texts (classicizing-rhetoric; Jewish apocalyptic/sectarian) widely deployed in some Pauline studies. My analysis and conclusions, in other words, are a corrective on views that read and understand Paul's letters, and Paul himself, primarily through certain lenses (highly educated Greco-Roman rhetor; Jewish apocalyptic sectarian).

Additional Comparanda for Further Study

In my appendices I've also included analysis of several other texts with varying utility for Pauline comparison. I've included three texts by Dio Chrysostom, another aristocratic, classicizing-rhetorical author, but one whose texts classicists have often identified as variable in content and style. *Oration 12* is of

interest for its concern with the gods, while *Orations 14* and *15* concern the ethical question of slavery versus freedom. All three of these texts contain content, in other words, that might suggest parallels to Paul's letters and other texts in his sphere. Yet we still see substantial divergences in form, the type of content, and social purpose, a point touched on in chapter one when formulating my spheres. Meanwhile, I haven't included texts from the scientific-technical sphere due to the fact that, beyond positing a few general grammatical and stylistic similarities such as we find in Rydbeck and Wifstrand, no scholar that I am aware of has attempted to explain Paul's literary style through a close reading of, for example, Hero of Alexandria's mathematics and engineering treatises or Ptolemy's *Almagest*.

Two other texts, *4 Maccabees* and the *Letter to the Hebrews*, are notable for their close overlaps with the texts in Paul's sphere, particularly the former as the latter is spare with regard to a few characteristics I believe are fundamental to that sphere (e.g., first person reflection, analysis of questions/objections, and conversation, though note the latter's general absence from Philodemus' works). Both works, it should be noted, treat religious claims, ethical matters derived from these claims, and focus on group construction around these claims, the authority of the author, and the tie between authorial authority and sacred texts. Both texts are also occasionally identified by biblical scholars as good comparanda for Paul, and I've chosen not to include an analysis of them here for reasons of space as well as my interest in focusing on certain other texts (Epictetus' *Discourses*; Philodemus' *On Death* and *On Piety*) that I think have gone generally neglected in studies of Paul's literary form.

The letters of Pliny the Younger, meanwhile, are less concerned with behavioral issues within broader religious claims, but their epistolary form has led many scholars to foreground them as potential comparanda. Indeed, Pliny's letters seem to generally match well with other texts in my sphere with regard to form, with certain exceptions, such as the very low amount of claims that I regard as central to this sphere. Pliny's letters also lack the length and sophistication of other texts in this sphere, manifesting as they do minor concerns as part of an often casual, dialogic correspondence. Thus, as I argued in chapter one with respect to a host of the so-called non-literary papyri, although Pliny's letters may provide some utility in detailing epistolary conventions and style as compared to Paul, we should avoid accepting Pliny's letters as effective descriptors of the body of the Paul's letters, for which they provide little comparison.

Another text that I've suggested for Pauline comparanda and to which I will return is Seneca's *Natural Questions*. Seneca seems more similar to Philodemus than Epictetus or Paul, as he possessed a highly advanced education, was a

wealthy aristocratic in the upper ambits of political power, and wrote other works that are perhaps analyzed under a different theoretical grouping than I propose for thinkers like Paul and Epictetus. Though his universal claims/assertions can somewhat differ from those of the other three authors, as Seneca is speaking about features of the natural world instead of making claims about human nature or the gods (though all three issues were closely related), the overall shape of Seneca's *Natural Questions* overlaps closely with the previous three authors' texts. And though the match is not exact, frequently these features occur in proportions roughly similar to texts within Paul's sphere, as shown in my appendices.

Seneca's *Natural Questions* rarely contain the rhetorical flourishes we find in advanced rhetorical theory, but it maintains a dialogic style, systematic structure, and logical progression. It lacks explicit appeals to authority, perhaps due to the fact that the appeals are implicit, relying on logic alone, or perhaps reflecting a personal, stylistic choice. We also see certain points of departure from the other texts in this sphere, such as Seneca's seeming disinterest in groupness. Overall, however, it seems that the *Natural Questions* might be usefully included in my taxonomy, as it contains shared clusters of literary characteristics, is concerned with practical ethics within a broader context of claims, addresses an audience, and makes its point within a logical structure.

I conclude by adding again that my lack of extensive analysis of these texts does not mean that I am arguing against the utility of these or other texts not included here for understanding elements of Paul and Paul's letters. Quite the contrary: I think it important that scholars investigate all literature contemporary to Paul in the ancient Mediterranean for potentially telling parallels in both form and content, including Greco-Roman rhetorical theory and the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Thinkers tend to draw from disparate sources, consciously or not, and certain elements of Paul's letters and thought may very well be best understood and explained through a passage from Isocrates or a section of *1 Enoch*. My point here is simply that the form of Paul's letters—which closely relates to and reflects their content and social purpose—is best understood and explained through other texts that I have theorized as belonging to Paul's same socio-literary sphere.

Socio-Historical Implications of Textual Comparison: The Education and Lives of Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus

Introduction

To this point, this study has undertaken several tasks. First, I argued for the necessity of re-thinking how we classify and conceive of Paul as writer, Paul's letters as literature, and the broader, contemporary ancient Mediterranean literary environment. Second, I detailed an approach to describing and classifying literature based on a wide, polythetic set of literary criteria that allows for nuanced, empirical comparisons of similarities and differences between texts. Third, I laid out what I found to be the specific literary criteria that best describe the shape and style of Paul's letters and other texts that also inhabit what I described as a particular socio-literary sphere. Fourth, I analyzed Paul's letters and other works by Epictetus (the *Discourses*) and Philodemus (*On Death* and *On Piety*) in detail, presenting a comparison of similarities and differences between these texts based on my set of literary criteria. Fifth, I briefly looked at two other works (Aelius Aristides' *Panathenaicus*; the *Damascus Document*) that represent two different kinds of literature that are frequently likened to Paul's letters (advanced rhetoric and Jewish apocalyptic, respectively). I demonstrated that these two texts do not contain the same levels of similarity with Paul's letters that were found in the works of Epictetus and Philodemus that I proposed shared Paul's socio-literary sphere.

From the standpoint of both theory and textual analysis, I believe that I have made my case about the need to re-conceptualize certain ancient Mediterranean Greco-Roman literature, the utility of re-conceptualizing it in a way that leads to empirical classification and transparent comparison, and the fact that Paul's letters are best understood as existing with a certain socio-literary sphere (ethical-philosophical) instead of others (aristocratic classicizing-rhetorical; Jewish apocalyptic; scientific-technical). So far, I have advanced my arguments via the treatment of existing secondary literature on Paul and his letters (chapters one and two), literary theory (chapter three), and textual comparison (chapter four). In other words, I have yet to substantially delve into the historical, social, and religious characteristics of the ancient Mediterranean that fundamentally relate to my theorization and textual analysis.

Although my previous discussion has at several points forwarded certain socio-historical implications, it remains to explicitly detail what my theorization and textual findings suggest about Paul, specifically about his education, his social status, and the role of religion in his life and socio-literary positioning. In this chapter, I return to my discussion of socio-literary spheres to explain in greater depth the relations between a text's form, content, and social purpose, and what these things suggest about the text's author in their socio-historical milieu. As social context is fundamentally interrelated to textual form, content, and purpose, a fuller explanation of social context can further illuminate our textual findings, and vice versa. Also, by speaking to social context there are additional important payoffs for historical questions about Paul and his life, as well as for Epictetus and Philodemus.

Biblical scholarship, for the most part, has historically focused on literary or theological questions at the expense of the sociological analysis, a point noted explicitly at the beginning of influential works by both John Gager¹ and Abraham Malherbe.² Since Gager and Malherbe, however, scholars have increasingly taken up an interest in wedding rhetorical matters to social and sociological questions.³ As Malherbe himself noted years ago now, the

1 J.G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1975) 3.

2 A.J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 3.

3 But a small sample: W. Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origin of Roman Christianity," in *The Romans Debate* (ed. K.P. Donfried; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977) 100–119; B. Witherington III, *What's in the Word: Rethinking the Socio-rhetorical Character of the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), though Witherington's focus is on orality as driving early Christian literature, which I critiqued in chapter one while acknowledging the wide prevalence of orality in the ancient world, as institutionalized scribal culture obfuscates the realities of a small world of highly competent individual text-producers in loose literary networks, further discussed below; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995); B. Witherington III and D. Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004); A.C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000); K.E. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), though Bailey concludes that Paul's style is closest to that of the Hebrew prophets, a point that I centrally dispute in the present study through close textual-stylistic analysis and comparison in chapter four. Commentaries such as Bailey's often focus their stylistic analysis on qualities such as parallelism or ring composition, additions useful for our understanding of Paul's style but which nonetheless fall short of the more extensive and detailed analysis that I argued is necessary to compare Paul's letters to other texts in an empirical, quantifiable way that can conclude in nuanced ways about similarities and

“sociological study of early Christianity cannot slight literary criticism,”⁴ and it is important to look to “the sociological functions of the different types of literature.”⁵ I have argued throughout the present study for the importance of linking a text’s social context and social function to questions of literary criticism, and I believe that my specific theorizing about socio-literary spheres and metadiscursivity has productively highlighted certain stylistic and social issues that have been traditionally neglected in favor of literary⁶ and/or theological⁷ concerns. These insights can also usefully supplement work that treats specific elements of Paul’s thought.⁸

This traditional interest in the literary and/or theological at the expense of the sociological stems, I think, both from the available evidence—we have Paul’s letters but know little about his life—and the traditional interests of

differences. It must also be noted that the presence of parallelism and ring composition falls far short of indicating any sort of advanced rhetorical education, which advocated for additional features such as Atticizing vocabulary, classical references, imitation of rhetorical paradigms such as Demosthenes or Isocrates, and stylistic features such as chiasmus, hiatus, and so forth.

- 4 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 15. Malherbe also provides an important corrective for the study of early Christian literature that is often ignored, namely that we should not look to “communities” as producers of literature. Malherbe suggests several alternatives to literary production: texts being produced and maintained because they challenged rather than supported or reflected communal views; groups not constituting actual communities producing texts, such as Cynic letters in the early Empire; and texts that produced groups, such as Roman Pythagoreanism.
- 5 Idem, 16; Malherbe cites the work of D.W. Riddle, *The Martyrs: A Study in Social Control* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1931) esp. 99–122. Malherbe later in the same book points us to the importance of looking to not only the form of similar types of literature, the *Haustafeln* or duties of household members, but their social function, 50, making reference also to his *Moral Exhortation* and D.L. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1981).
- 6 Such as ‘how did Paul’s letters rhetorically persuade his audience?’; see, e.g., M.R. Cosby, “Paul’s Persuasive Language in Romans 5,” in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. D.F. Watson; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 209–226.
- 7 Such as ‘how did Paul’s letters reflect his divine mission?’; see, e.g., J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).
- 8 Many scholars focus on specific elements of Paul’s content, such as how he envisions the role of *pneuma* or the figure of Christ. The present study does not participate in these debates, preferring to discuss content in the abstract, such as where and to what extent cosmological or religious claims appear in Paul’s letters versus certain other contemporary texts. The present study, in other words, can usefully supplement work focused on teasing out and understanding the specific elements of Paul’s thought, a central concern for theologians, literary critics, and historians alike.

biblical scholars, who tended to focus more on theological concepts and literary ideas than sociological issues. The recent focus on the historical Jesus seems to me to signal the pendulum of scholarship swinging back toward social and historical matters and away from theological-textual issues. Scholars with increasing frequency are trained in ancient Mediterranean society and history rather than philology, the latter of which was common in the generations of scholars like Deissmann and Bornkamm with their emphasis on form criticism, though this was itself a departure from the interest of some in the late-nineteenth century *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*.⁹ The changing times reflect, I believe, changing interests as well as a field that has increasingly and productively included insights from a host of other fields such as sociology and anthropology.

At the beginning of this project I reviewed a host of scholarship pertaining to Paul that I argued described Paul's letters inaccurately or inadequately. My critiques were generally aimed at two poles of scholarship: one pole which described Paul's letters as reflecting the common, spoken vernacular, and another pole which described Paul's letters as reflecting the aristocratic-classicizing language and style that we see described in the advanced rhetorical handbooks of ancient rhetorical theorists like Quintilian. Each pole's understanding of the style of Paul's letters also contained implications for Paul's social position: the former painted Paul as lower class and speaking the vernacular of the 'common people',¹⁰ likely with the minimum education

9 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 7–8. Malherbe points to a specific interest in social organization relative to potential contemporary analogues such as guilds and philosophical associations. He suggests specific reference to O. Linton, *Das Problem der Urkirche in der neueren Forschung: eine Kritische Darstellung von Olof Linton* (Uppsala: Lundequist, 1932) and R.L. Wilken, "Collegia, Philosophical Schools, and Theology," in *The Catacombs and the Colosseum: The Roman Empire as the Setting of Primitive Christianity* (ed. S. Benko and J.J. O'Rourke; Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1971) 268–291.

10 For a summary of the "common view of Paul," see W.A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1983) 51f., particularly with reference to Deissmann. I agree with Meeks' critiques; furthermore, descriptions such as 'lower class' or 'upper class' are often unsatisfactory due to their lack of specificity. These types of identification are always relative terms, and even if Paul could be considered lower class relative to the aristocracy, if he was in fact a tradesperson (tent-maker) and Roman citizen then he would have had a political, economic, and social status well above the vast majority of people in the areas he traveled. The account in *Acts* aside, Paul's proficient composition of lengthy, complex letters referencing the Septuagint and other ethical-philosophical material is clear evidence for his elevated intellectual and educational standing relative to most people during his time. I will return to the question of status below.

necessary to write a letter, or even entrusting most or all of the composition to a scribe;¹¹ the latter painted Paul as highly educated, drawing from advanced rhetorical theory (directly or indirectly)¹² to craft sophisticated

11 J.D. Hester, "The Use and Influence of Rhetoric in Galatians 2:1-14," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 42 (1986) 386-408, esp. 408, argues that Paul left the composition of the letter itself to "one carefully versed in rhetoric." See also E.R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990) and Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004). While a prominent scribal role is possible in the composition of Paul's letters, Hester's and Richards' studies represent an approach that attempts to maintain a low status for Paul while pointing out sophisticated compositional techniques. The evidence these scholars marshal, however, is quite slim, especially when compared against Paul's own claims to penning his letters, e.g., in *1 Cor* 16:21, *Col* 4:18, *Gal* 6:11, *Phlm* 19, and *2 Thess* 3:17, though obviously this evidence is not definitive. For some further discussion representative of this debate, see T.J. Kraus, "Eine vertragsrechtliche Verpflichtung in *Phlm* 19: Duktus und juristischer Hintergrund," in *Steht nicht geschrieben? Studien zur Bibel und ihrer Wirkungs-geschichte* (ed. J. Frühwald-König et al.; Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2001) 187-200. As Porter and Pitts, "Paul's Bible," 38-39, point out, the belief that Paul's indication of a secretary indicates his illiteracy "reflects a failure to understand the illiteracy formula, which instead indicates that Paul is legally affirming what has been said above. His comment that he wrote with large letters probably has little to do with his writing abilities . . . this and corresponding statements in Paul provide us with little insight regarding Paul's level of literacy, other than that he had the ability to sign his letters with his own hand. Many of the great writers of Greco-Roman antiquity employed a secretary (e.g., Cicero, Cato) so that Paul's use of one is hardly evidence against his literacy." See also early, influential discussion in R.N. Longenecker, "Ancient Amanuenses and the Pauline Epistles," in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* (ed. R. Longenecker and M.C. Tenney; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974) 281-297.

12 Thus, goes the argument, even if Paul was not specifically trained in advanced rhetoric he picked up many of its conventions from the surrounding culture. Related to this assertion is the implication that Paul, even if not formally trained in advanced rhetoric, desired to sound classically educated. The internal evidence of Paul's letters, as I have argued above at several previous points, does not support this. Though I do not find it implausible that Paul could have picked up significant stylistic elements of advanced rhetoric from the surrounding culture or a variety of educational venues, the weight of the evidence lies elsewhere. Paul, for example, lacks vast amounts of the stylistic-aesthetic trappings of advanced rhetorical training recommended by rhetorical theorists such as Quintilian (Atticizing vocabulary; imitation of Isocrates or Demosthenes; features such as extensive chiasmus, hiatus, and so forth), and also entirely lacks any classical references. My conclusions are along generally similar lines to what we find in Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, drawing from Judge, "St. Paul and Classical Society," the latter of whom argues that Paul acquired rhetorical training without formal schooling, leading Malherbe to conclude that "perhaps rhetorical facility did not form a conspicuous social dividing line," 56. Malherbe

treatises.¹³ Some of this scholarship that I critiqued has nonetheless drawn the same structural connection that I do in this project, namely the close link between the type of literature that Paul's letters are and Paul's social location and education. In other words, I agree with the oft-proposed link between type of literary output and authorial social location. I simply disagree on how to describe and categorize this literary output and thus frame Paul's social location.

Furthermore, there was neither a direct nor constant correlation between education and social standing in the ancient (or, for that matter, modern) world.¹⁴ This fact challenges us to provide a more nuanced account of not only education, and related subjects such as literacy, but also of social standing. A more complex and nuanced account of social standing requires, similarly to what I argued for my literary analysis, multiple descriptive characteristics to achieve a fuller picture, considering factors such as wealth, education, ethnic status, religious practice, and so forth.¹⁵ I will return to this point below, where I will provide a fuller list of specific measures of social standing to flesh out Paul's social location.

and Judge in my eyes have too strict a definition of 'rhetoric', defining it only in terms of what I call advanced, aristocratic classicizing-rhetorical training, whereas Paul seems to have picked up certain literary tropes, from epistolography in particular, that do not reflect this type of training. Nonetheless, Malherbe and Judge seem to be moving along the correct general lines, thinking of Paul's education in a flexible, ad hoc way that I think was more common in the ancient world than is currently recognized in biblical studies.

- 13 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 46f., drawing from Judge, "St. Paul and Classical Society," who argues that Paul had a large professional retinue and that Paul's actions placed him in a social class akin to rhetors and philosophers. Malherbe and Judge's accounts both conclude that Paul was a Roman citizen, a substantial boost to his social status, but given that this conclusion is derived from *Acts* I don't think it can be included in any account of Paul. Nonetheless, Judge's account, followed by Malherbe, that envisions Paul moving in well-established circles, is not implausible, as Paul references networks of people that seem to include patrons running households.
- 14 Highly educated slaves are an example of high education and low status, though they certainly didn't occupy the lowest rungs of society, while largely illiterate village chiefs would be an example of low education and high status. We should keep in mind the complexities and wide possibilities inherent in such descriptors as "status" and "education", however, points to which I will return below.
- 15 The modern scholarly discussion of different status indicators stems most prominently from Max Weber: M. Weber, "Status Groups and Classes," in *Economy and Society* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1978 [1922]). Further discussion below by scholars such as Wayne Meeks take Weber as their starting point.

Some scholars, however, do provide an account of Paul's letters and social location that I believe accurately reflects the textual and socio-historical contextual evidence. I mentioned in my introduction that a small group of scholars have attempted to detail the complexities of letter composition and how epistolography had a limited but complex relationship with advanced rhetorical theory.¹⁶ This focus on epistolography has paid dividends for framing Paul's education and social location, resulting in a characterization of Paul that places him and his letters apart from these two positions I critiqued above (common vernacular of the people and low-class social location; high rhetorical treatise and advanced education and social standing). I concluded with certain of these scholars that it seemed best to identify specific areas of influence instead of trying to pigeon-hole Paul's letters, or large sections of his letters, as manifesting specific rhetorical types. I will briefly review this scholarship that has given us a productive way forward in thinking of Paul and his letters, speak to where I agree and disagree with certain of their conclusions, and then provide my own comments about where my study's theorization and textual analysis modifies or adds to these accounts, specifically speaking to Paul's education and his social location within his particular socio-literary sphere.

Paul's Letters, Literacy, and Education

As with Paul's status, discussed in chapter two, there is no consensus in Pauline scholarship about Paul's education.¹⁷ The issues of status and education

16 E.g., S.E. Porter, C. Poster, M.L. Stirewalt, Jr., and S.K. Stowers. My phrasing here is taken directly from Stowers, "Apostrophe."

17 A couple useful starting points from recent studies: Porter and Pitts, "Paul's Bible," and A.W. Pitts, "Hellenistic Schools in Jerusalem and Paul's Rhetorical Education," in *Paul's World* (ed. S.E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 19–50. Though Porter and Pitts usefully frame the issue, provide excellent analysis of the data and secondary literature, and are largely on base, I depart from their conclusions in a few areas. For one, both lean heavily on the account of Paul's life in *Acts* which, as I touch on in this chapter, is typical in scholarship but should not be a departure point for a historical reconstruction of Paul, though obviously how one dates *Acts* (I date it at the end of the first century CE, possibly even into the second; I suspect Porter and Pitts would date it earlier) is a fundamental issue here. We should move from what is more to less well known, and I argue that using Paul's known letters and literary style is a better way to frame his level of education relative to other figures, such as Epictetus and Philodemus, than the less well known dating and compositional context of *Acts*. Another objection revolves around the focus of both Porter and Pitts on formal schooling. As I argue in chapters one and five, this focus on

are related, but we must recognize that a high status did not necessitate an advanced education¹⁸ nor did an advanced education automatically place one amongst the social elite.¹⁹ For Paul, we cannot be definitive about his education based on the current evidence, and any plausible conclusions we forward here can only speak to the *minimum* of education:²⁰ those possessing an advanced

formal schooling is typical, derivative of the traditional focus on formal, multi-tiered, advanced rhetorical education, and consequently overlooks the number of other possible venues and types of education available in the ancient world, such as bureaucratic, familial, ad hoc, and domain-specific with a particular teacher. Though both Porter and Pitts acknowledge these other types, their reconstruction of Paul does not reflect them.

- 18 See e.g., P. Annus Seleucus of Pompeii, although his status as a freedman draws attention to the vagaries of the phrase 'social location.' For other examples, see W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) 33–34 for the frequent use of literate intermediaries in business and social transactions, 278 for attestations of third century CE village chiefs being illiterate. Such types of people highlight the fact that social location or status is comprised of multiple indicators, some of which may not line up and in turn produce what Meeks called status inconsistency, as we see in these examples when comparing literacy education and political or social power.
- 19 Educated slaves running aristocratic households are a perfect example, though these types of slaves obviously occupied a higher social location than most other slaves as well as many people of the lower classes. Such examples serve to point out the many complex currents comprising a concept like 'social location.' It remains a useful concept, despite these difficulties, due to its generality by encompassing all sorts of social relations. One's social location by definition is a complex phenomenon, but this should not prevent us from trying to frame it in ways such as education and type of literary output that do identify certain social relations and general social understandings about status.
- 20 Judging by the complexity of Paul's letters, he probably had received training equivalent to the *progymnasmata*, which covered knowledge of the alphabet, words, reading, types of composition, and some practice in these types. This is also the conclusion of Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 17, Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 10, and Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 277, all of whom cautiously avoid arguing that Paul had formal education of the aristocratic, classicizing sort. It is important to note, in support of this position, that the *progymnasmata* could be taught formally or informally, and in any number of settings apart from formal, advanced rhetorical education, as I show in this chapter. For additional discussion of this issue with different conclusion that reflects an understanding of education in a formal, multi-tiered way and places the *progymnasmata* at the tertiary stage of education, see R.F. Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. J.P. Sampley; Harrisburg, PA: TPIJ, 2003) 198–227. For discussion of the *progymnasmata* and how they were taught, see J.J. Murphy, "Habit in Roman Writing Instruction," in *A Short History of Writing Instruction: From Ancient Greece to Modern America* (ed. J.J. Murphy; 2nd ed.; Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001). For the exercises themselves and discussion, see G.A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2003).

education had the training and knowledge to write in different styles, which varied based on the occasion and purpose of the composition.²¹ Although I find it likely that students with advanced rhetorical educations would gain facility with certain compositional skills derived from an epistolary-specific education,²² the inverse is by no means true and we have evidence for specialized letter-writers and letter-writing education. In what follows, I side with a handful of scholars who characterize Paul as a trained letter-writer instead of an advanced rhetorician or lower-class populist.²³

The attempt to suggest things about Paul's education and status through an investigation of his compositional medium (letters) is in many ways a matter of classification: What *kind* of writer is Paul? This question inevitably takes up questions of classification in letter-writing itself: Who wrote letters? What kinds of letters existed in the ancient world? Did certain types of people write certain types of letters? What level of education was necessary to write letters? Much important work has been done on these questions.²⁴ I will summarize

The most well-known of these *progymnasma* handbooks is probably that of Aphthonius: H. Rabe, *Aphthonii Progymnasmata* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1926), though there are other examples, such as by Aelius Theon and Hermogenes of Tarsus: O.P. Hoppichler, *De Theone, Hermogene, Aphthonique Progymnasmatum Scriptoribus* (1884).

- 21 A linkage of form, content, and social purpose that lends additional weight to my own theorization of socio-literary spheres based on this very linkage. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 45, likewise concludes that the best we can do is speak to the minimum of education, but he generally places the New Testament writers at the "upper levels of secondary-school instruction," too strong an emphasis, I think, on Marrou's account that relies on the aristocratic-rhetorical educational model at the expense of other ways of being educated such as in the home, in a bureaucratic setting, or informally and ad hoc.
- 22 So Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 59, with reference to his *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*: "letters were written as an exercise in style early in the tertiary stage of the educational system."
- 23 So M. Dibelius, C. Poster, J.T. Reed, M.L. Stirewalt, S.K. Stowers, U.v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf.
- 24 This is but a sampling, with greater weight to recent works, many of which have further bibliography from early German scholarship: A.J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988); H. Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1956); K. Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römische Briefepik* (Monographien zur klassischen Altertumswissenschaft 48; Munich: Beck, 1970); J.L. White, "New Testament Epistolary Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (ed. W. Haase and H. Temporini; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984) 2.25/2, 1730–1756; K. Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," in *Idem* 1326–1363, esp. 1333–1340 on questions of methodology; C. Poster, "The Economy of Letter Writing

a few relevant points from this field, recognizing that there is a tremendous amount more that could be said and that the theorization and comparison of Paul based on epistolography remains a fruitful avenue for further research.

Epistolography as a subject of theoretical reflection perhaps only arose in the first century BCE with Ps.-Demetrius' *De Elocutione*. Cicero then followed in the first century CE with some scattered reflection.²⁵ Yet while Cicero seems to be aware of prior rhetoricians' comments on letter writing and general Greek epistolographical conventions,²⁶ it doesn't seem that he thought of epistolography as a self-contained system.²⁷ Malherbe points out that Cicero and Seneca both provide advice on letters in a practical, situational manner,²⁸ and the only passing remarks of the prominent rhetoricians Quintilian and Theon of Alexandria do little to dispute this conclusion.²⁹ Malherbe notes the

in Greco-Roman Antiquity," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (ed. A. Eriksson, T.H. Olbricht, and W. Ubelacker; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002); S.K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1989 [1986]); H.-J. Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006 [1998]), with additional bibliography; M. Trapp, ed., *Greek and Latin Letters: An Anthology with Translation* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); R. Morello and A.D. Morrison, eds., *Ancient Letters: Classical and Late Antique Epistolography* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). The fact that scholars like Morello and Morrison treat letters from Epicurus and Seneca but skip over Paul reflects, I think, the disciplinary caution exercised by classicists and historians when treating material from biblical studies. Paul's exclusion from this kind of overview, even one specifically relating to Greco-Roman epistolography, seems to imply an understanding that Paul's letters are in some sense of a different kind than other contemporary letters of the Greco-Roman Mediterranean. The reader may recall I investigated a similar exclusion of Paul's texts from general Greco-Roman literary surveys, discussed in chapter one.

25 H. Koskenniemi, "Cicero über die Briefarten (*genera epistularum*)," *Arctos* (1954) 97–102.

26 C.W. Keyes, "The Greek Letter of Introduction," *American Journal of Philology* 56 (1935) 44.

27 Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 2–3. This corrects an earlier view that Cicero took up in its entirety a fully developed Greek theory of epistolography: see H. Peter, *Der Brief in der römischen Literatur* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901) 22. Modern scholars attempting to delineate the field of epistolography point out this difficulty of definition, e.g., the work in Morello and Morrison that seems to settle on Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblances: R.K. Gibson and A.D. Morrison, "Introduction: What is a Letter?," in Morello and Morrison, *Ancient Letters*, 1f.

28 See also K. Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römische Brieftopik*, 65–74.

29 G.A. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, 300 B.C.–A.D. 300* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 487–514 on Quintilian, 615–616 on Theon.

apparent oddity of this situation given the fact that “sophists quite regularly occupied the position of *ab epistulis* [‘minister of letters’] in chanceries.”³⁰

What is extant with regard to ancient letter writing are two handbooks, one entitled *Tupoi Epistolikoi* and falsely attributed to Demetrius of Phalerum, and the other entitled *Epistolimaioi Characteres* and attributed to either Libanius or Proclus the Neoplatonist.³¹ These are supplemented by evidence showing that teachers used model letters of their own as paradigms for their students,³² with early examples of such letters surviving in Greek.³³ Importantly, these handbooks and paradigms “did not intend to set forth detailed norms or forms, but presented a framework which allowed for individual creativity,”³⁴ an important corrective for those who see Paul’s creativity and epistolographic flexibility as unique innovation.³⁵ Malherbe concludes, rightly I think, that these handbooks were not primarily used for advanced rhetorical education but that “[i]t is more likely that the handbooks were used in the training of professional letter writers.”³⁶ This point departs somewhat from an earlier generation of scholarship that tended to view education as a formal, multi-tiered process

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- 30 Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 3. He references the comments in Philostratus, *V.S.* 590; 607; Eunapius, *V.S.* 497, and discussion in G.W. Bowerstock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) 44, 50–57.
- 31 Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 4f. For further discussion and bibliography on these handbooks, see Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*; Stowers, *Letter Writing*; and Klauck, *Ancient Letters*.
- 32 A. Erman, *Die Literatur der Ägypter* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1923) 252–260. For an example of student letter-writing exercises in both Greek and Latin, see the Papyrus Bononiensis, where the student seems to be following a handbook: O. Montevicchi, ed., *Papyri Bononienses* (Milan, 1953).
- 33 U. Wilchen, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (Altere Funde)* I (Berlin; Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1927); for use as school exercises, see W. Schmid, “Ein epistolographisches Übungsstück unter den Pariser Papyri,” *Neue Jahrbucher f. Philol. u. Paedag.* 145 (1892) 692–699; and also Koskeniemi, *Studien*, 57–59.
- 34 Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 5; see also Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römische Brieftopik*, 9, 12 n. 21. This point and others are discussed especially well in the introduction to Morello and Morrison, *Ancient Letters*, v–xii; see also Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters*, who emphasizes the huge variability of letters and letter-types.
- 35 So, e.g., Stirewalt, *Paul, the Letter Writer*, 25, who pairs this with an understanding of Paul as pioneering theologian. Regardless of what one thinks of Paul as unique or innovative in the realm of ideas, he learned to write within his cultural context, and one of this study’s central arguments is that he, consciously or not, internalized conventions of form, content, social purpose, and their mutual interrelation.
- 36 Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 7. See also W. Schubart, *Einführung in die Papyruskunde* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1918) 198–199, 248.

that well describes elite, rhetorical education but doesn't account for the huge amount of informal education taking place within bureaucratic or familial settings.³⁷ Malherbe does, however, share with such scholars the belief that this type of training generally took place under the auspices of a rhetorician,³⁸ a conclusion that to some extent continues to privilege the role of advanced, formal rhetoric at the expense of other venues and types of education.

This position of Malherbe and others is, in my mind, corrected by Kennedy, who argues that "letter writing was on the fringes of formal education," and surmises that instruction in it might have been given by experienced civil servants.³⁹ I side with Kennedy by seeing in the extensive amount of slave education and education internal to large households wide possibilities for epistolary or other types of continued literary education.⁴⁰ Large households—such as those run by Epictetus' master or Philodemus' patron Piso—needed staff with specific literacy-educational skills to keep the financial books as well as epistolary training to write letters for reasons both business and personal. Letters both business and personal were of such importance and frequency that we

37 This position that I critique continues to persist, e.g., Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," and D. Hellholm, "Enthymemic Argumentation in Paul: The Case of *Romans* 6," in *Paul in his Hellenistic Context*, 119–179. Occupying somewhat of a middle-ground here is T. Vegge, *Paulus und das antike Schulwesen: Schule und Bildung des Paulus* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), a work to which I will return below. Some other scholars dispute whether or not Paul was formally schooled within this three-tier system, but still seek analogues for Paul's education within it, e.g., C.J. Classen, *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), and Classen, "Paul's Bible, His Education and His Access to the Scriptures of Israel," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 5 (2008) 9–41. As I argued in both this chapter and chapter two, I side with the latter two scholars in seeing modes of education outside of this formal, multi-tiered, advanced rhetorical model, particularly by looking to handbooks and ad hoc instruction of a variety of types (formal and informal) as the best way to describe and explain Paul's education and study.

38 Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 7. Schmid, Wilcken, and Schubart all agree.

39 G.A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 70–73.

40 Porter and Pitts, "Paul's Bible," for example, recognize (with Kaster, "Notes") that the three-fold, advanced rhetorical education is too firm an understanding of education: "[it] is overly rigid, with there being abundant evidence that the educational system of the time was much more flexible and less rigid than previous scholarship has realized, and more subject to regional variation," 15–16. Nonetheless, their account still uses the conceptual framework and language of formal, defined "schools" throughout, which I argue misrepresents the wide continuum and variability of education not only available but fairly common in Paul's world.

find reference to the position of *ab epistulis*, what Malherbe translates as “minister of letters”, in especially large households or bureaucratic institutions. For elite figures such as Philodemus’ patron Piso, the line between household and bureaucratic-political institution was blurred, as business and home-life often completely overlapped. We might, for example, imagine one of Philodemus’ duties being to instruct certain of Piso’s household (slaves or attached freedmen) in epistolary composition techniques in order to help conduct the household’s official business.

Regardless of where one stands on the question of whether or not a rhetorician specifically taught these specialized epistolography skills, it nonetheless remains that this was an available educational avenue for many in the ancient world, including slaves.⁴¹ It is worth recalling on this point that Epictetus was himself a slave during substantial of his formative, early years, during which he likely received some type of basic education that he later supplemented by studying with the philosopher Musonius Rufus. For Paul, an intellectual milieu that wedded Greco-Roman language, rhetoric, and philosophical ideas to Judean religious practice is far from implausible. Indeed, as Malherbe notes, “[t]he Hellenization of Palestine was more thorough than has been thought, even to the extent that disciples of the rabbis were educated in Greek philosophy and rhetoric.”⁴²

I object to Malherbe’s implicit contrast of Hellenism versus Palestinian Judaism,⁴³ as well as at other points when he seems to have a particular idea of “Greekness” in mind, such as when he states that “[t]he Septuagint and the New Testament have vocabulary and usages that would have been strange to a Greek.”⁴⁴ Nonetheless, I agree with Malherbe’s argument that the ancient Mediterranean was not as strictly demarcated along ethnic, religious, and linguistic lines as many have thought. This general, theoretical re-orientation toward blurring these categories is increasingly gaining favor in biblical

41 A.D. Booth, “The Schooling of Slaves in First-Century Rome,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 109 (1979) 11–19. Slaves in the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean possessed a wide variety of educational levels, and many highly educated slaves were used as tutors and scribes for wealthy households, a practice that preceded Paul and persisted well into late antiquity: E. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (TCHS 41; Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2006); see also Martial, 10:62.1–5.

42 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 35.

43 Or ‘Romanness’ versus Palestinian Judaism, as we find in Porter and Pitts, “Paul’s Bible,” 31 n. 3: “Paul was not a Palestinian Jew, but a member of the Roman world, and is considered in that light here.”

44 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 37.

studies and the historical study of the ancient Mediterranean more broadly.⁴⁵ My language of socio-literary spheres reflects my own attempt to move beyond these reified categories and dichotomies (e.g., Jewish versus Greek, or literary Hellenic versus common vernacular) that obstruct proper description and explanation of Paul's letters.

Thinking of Paul as a letter writer using handbooks (or as an even more complex amalgam of categories!)⁴⁶ is a more productive route for envisioning Paul's education and literary practice than him possessing an extensive rhetorical education or having a scribe record him speaking in a common vernacular.⁴⁷ Paul, for example, nowhere demonstrates the extensive use of classical citation we typically find in those so educated,⁴⁸ and he writes in a much different style

45 A fairly recent example can be found in many of the essays in T. Engerg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001). In other words, I think that questions of 'whether Paul is more Hellenistic or Jewish', or 'whether Judaea was more Hellenistic, Roman, or Palestinian', are largely missing the point; see J.J. Collins and G.E. Sterling, eds., *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

46 M. Mitchell, for instances, categorizes Paul as "part poet, part prophet, part philosopher and part populist orator," in "Le style, c'est l'homme", 387. I would add "letter writer," "handbook user," and even other categories such as "religious entrepreneur" and "lifelong learner" to this list.

47 A couple recent books make this characterization explicit: M.L. Stirewalt, *Paul, the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), and J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995). I am sympathetic to this particular characterization despite a series of other objections to these two works.

48 Early scholarship was inclined to seek classical references in Paul, but these positions have long since fallen out of favor due to the minuscule amount of references (some have three in all of Paul's extant letters) and the extreme stretch of an argument these scholars make to attempt to show even a vague allusion. See for example, R. Renehan, "Classical Greek Quotations in the New Testament," in *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honor of the Very Reverend Georges Vasilievich Florovsky* (ed. D. Neiman and M. Schatkin; Rome, 1973) 17–45, and E.B. Howell, "St. Paul and the Greek World," *Greece and Rome*, 2nd ser., XI (1964) 7–29, who saw a debt to Plato. Such positions were definitively rebutted by H.R. Minn, "Classical Reminiscence in St. Paul," *Prudentia* 6 (1974) 93–98. For brief history of this debate, see Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 41–42, who argues that many of Paul's "allusions come from widespread sapiential traditions" instead of "Greek literature," by which Malherbe seems to mean the canon of classical texts taught in advanced rhetorical education such as Homer, Euripides, and Demosthenes. Indeed, he points to a couple of examples from playwrights that Paul seems to reproduce un-reflexively, citing F.W. Danker, "Menander and the New Testament," *NTS* 10 (1964) 365–368, and H.B. Rosén, "Motifs and *Topoi* from the New Comedy in the New Testament?," *Ancient Society* 3 (1972)

than those we know to possess an advanced rhetorical education like Aelius Aristides. Meanwhile, the use of handbooks was extensive and well documented, and these handbooks contained sufficient material and examples for someone to pick up both philosophical tropes and literary rhetorical devices.⁴⁹ Handbooks also, in the words of Stowers, indicate a “form and language that is appropriate to the logic of the social code in a particular instance,”⁵⁰ reflecting the intersection of form, content, and social purpose that has underpinned my research, argument, and conclusions throughout this study.

The prevalence of handbooks as widely-available educational supplement cannot be overstated, and is a corrective on most views of education that envision formal schooling, such as advocated by Quintilian, that seem to primarily describe aristocratic, advanced rhetorical education. The two main handbooks extant under the names Demetrius and Proclus/Libanius and additional examples found in the papyri—which may also be school copybooks but which evidence the same use of teaching formulae—can all give “evidence of training in

245–257. For an articulation of the stricter view of rhetorical categorization I am generally arguing against here, see J. Fairweather, “The Epistle to the Galatians and Classical Rhetoric,” *TynBul* 45 (1994) 1–38, which is picked up by scholars such as Hengel, Porter, and Pitts. Examples of other authors with some level of rhetorical education but who don’t use Atticizing vocabulary and citation seem to further support my point that we need to re-theorize how we conceive of different kinds of ancient literature by using the language of socio-literary spheres and focusing on different groupings of texts sharing form, content, and social purpose.

- 49 Malherbe makes explicit the importance of “handbooks, anthologies, and summaries” in education, arguing that classical allusions and quotations do, however, reflect a certain level of literary culture: “The writings of Hellenistic authors, especially those of the moral philosophers, teem with quotations of this type,” *Social Aspects*, 43. Handbooks were widespread in the ancient world, containing distillations of everything from central doctrines of different philosophical schools to rhetorical tropes to scientific-technical literature: Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 44; I. Opelt, “Epitome,” *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 5 (1962) 944–973. Opelt’s work here is invaluable, providing extensive bibliography, identifying over 150 ancient examples, and discussing the use of handbooks in a huge variety of fields: philosophy, grammar, law, history, myth, medicine, rhetoric, and war. We might well consider Epictetus’ *Enchiridion* a handbook, though even more condensed handbooks were available. For a recent discussion of the use of handbooks in even highly technical subjects, see B. Dunsch, “*Arte rates reguntur*: Nautical Handbooks in Antiquity?,” *Studies In History and Philosophy of Science Part A* 32.2 (June 2012) 270–383.
- 50 Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 57; see also Stowers, “Social Typification and the Classification of Ancient Letters,” in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism* (ed. J. Neusner et al.; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988) 78–90, esp. 87, where he argues that handbooks give us sociological insights.

letter composition as an aspect of training in the schools,⁵¹ by which Doty and others seem to mean formal venues for early literacy education. We also possess school-books, primarily from Roman Egypt, that show a huge variance in student ability and levels of literacy,⁵² though this evidence is temporally and geographically limited, and seems to focus on formal schooling.

Yet we shouldn't think of a formal "school" in this sense so much as a specific type of literary training.⁵³ Carol Poster persuasively concludes along these lines, and details a continuum of literacy from basic literacy, to the professional sub-elite, to the rhetorically advanced.⁵⁴ Poster does well to show internal variance within these categories, and her conclusions are quite useful for our reconstruction of Paul here.

51 W.G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1973) 9–10. See also J. Sykutris, "Epistolographie," *PWSup* 5 (1931) 185–220, esp. 198; Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 222 ns. 1 and 2; Koskeniemi, *Studien*, 57–59.

52 For an example of what these looked like, see P.J. Parsons, "A School-Book from the Sayce Collection," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 6 (1970) 133–149. Further discussion can be found in the work of Raffaella Cribiore, discussed more below: R. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). Scholars focusing on the papyri and other "non-literary" sources inevitably come to nuanced conclusions about literacy existing widely and along a continuum, e.g., V. Bubenik, *Hellenistic and Roman Greece as a Sociolinguistic Area* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1989) 61; see also R.S. Bagnall, *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2011).

53 Indeed, the accounts of Malherbe and others such as H.D. Betz (1974–75 and 1972) are far too invested in Marrou's classic account of three-fold steps of rhetorical education, though the work of scholars like Malherbe and Betz has been a useful corrective for Deissmann's account. For ancient education, see H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956, 1982), a work that despite some flaws remains both useful and influential. Much education was not so formal, and Malherbe's and Marrou's accounts ignore alternative educational settings for types of people such as slaves, scribes, or freedmen: literary-bureaucratic, familial, and an ad-hoc tutor or instructor. For correctives of Marrou's influential work that point to the tremendous contextual variation in types of education, see especially M.P. Nilsson, *Die hellenistische Schule* (München: C.H. Beck, 1955) and R.A. Kaster, "Notes on 'Primary' and 'Secondary' Schools in Late Antiquity," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 113 (1983) 323–346. See also discussion in Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 233f.

54 C. Poster, "The Economy of Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (ed. A. Eriksson, T.H. Olbricht, and W. Ubelacker; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002). For a similar conclusion, rendered more broadly and with different emphasis, see Bagnall, *Everyday Writing*, 143.

Poster places Paul among the professional sub-elite or non-elite letter writers, whom she describes thusly:

Professional letter writers in nonelite private employment or government office would know extensive letter-writing formulae, including appropriate salutations for all ranks and legal signature formulae. At the upper end of this category, we find knowledge of letter types (Ps.-Demetrius) and the appropriate language and approach for each type. Training at this level included preliminary instruction in basic literacy and some mix of tachygraphy, legal formulae, and/or specialized epistolary theory.⁵⁵

Poster notes further that “specific economic functions of epistolarity within the Graeco-Roman world resulted in multiple epistolary theories, style, and pedagogies,”⁵⁶ and she concludes that “[t]he appropriate comparanda, therefore, for the Pauline letters, are not the works of the Graeco-Roman elite, but rather works by other subelite writers from the Greek east, perhaps Epictetus or authors of subliterate or documentary papyri.”⁵⁷

These conclusions dovetail with my own attempts to characterize the other texts in Paul’s socio-literary sphere as existing outside the sphere of aristocratic, classicizing rhetoric,⁵⁸ and my argument that we must look widely across the ancient Mediterranean to find comparanda and usefully generalize in a broader, Greco-Roman cultural context. As Malherbe notes, “[t]he literary character of Paul’s letters forms one aspect of the question of his literary and rhetorical culture,”⁵⁹ and my attempt to frame broader socio-literary spheres incorporating the style of particular texts reflects this realization.

A couple other scholars have likewise looked for comparanda with parallels to Paul’s letters in style and content in the wider ancient Mediterranean. W.G. Doty laudably looked across a large spectrum of Greek and Latin literature, seeking parallels for early Christian letters in authors as early as Plato,

55 Poster, “Economy of Letter Writing,” 123.

56 Ibid.

57 Idem, 124. It is worth noting that the “documentary papyri” as comparanda have also been long identified by biblical philologists since Deissmann as affording great potential for linguistic comparison with the New Testament.

58 Philodemus seems to have had an aristocratic, classicizing-rhetorical education, and both Philodemus and Epictetus had the advanced education of philosophy itself, but they both produced texts that were outside the bounds of aristocratic, classicizing rhetoric. I will return to this question below.

59 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 57.

Isocrates, Aristotle, Demosthenes, and Epicurus.⁶⁰ Arguing that official correspondences became increasingly important with the ascendancy of Rome and the expansion of empire,⁶¹ Doty recognized that these official correspondences needed types of people with specific literary training and skills to compose letters according to certain conventions, what he calls “courtly training,”⁶² though lamentably he doesn’t flesh out precisely what this would have entailed or its implications for someone like Paul. As I have previously argued in line with Poster, Malherbe, and others above, we do have evidence that this type of education existed, as well as evidence for those in society whose job it was to pen texts of this nature.

M. Luther Stirewalt, Jr. also saw “official letters” as crucial to the study of Paul’s letters, as Stirewalt believes that these official letters were the driving influence behind the general shape of epistolography in Paul’s time.⁶³ Stirewalt’s comparisons of Paul’s letters with other official letters suggests that Paul’s letters are closest to “official and for personal business letters.”⁶⁴ He concludes that in “five units—identification of primary sender, naming of co-senders, multiple address, dual structure of the body, and subscriptions—Paul adapted the conventions of official correspondence.”⁶⁵ For Stirewalt and Doty both, Paul’s letters have significant parallels with other types of contemporary letters whose authors possessed a limited type of epistolary-specific education and filled a social location neither among the lowest classes nor among the elite aristocracy. Doty and Stirewalt also deserve credit for furnishing specific Pauline comparanda.⁶⁶ Doty, for example, suggests the works of Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Epicurus, Horace, Seneca, Pliny, Quintilian, and Apollonius of Tyana.

Doty adds that “[o]f equal weight with the letters discussed so far—which were transmitted to us in literary sources—are the thousands of personal,

60 Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 3.

61 Ibid., a historical argument bolstered by the fact that many more Roman letters survived than Greek ones, but an argument not necessarily sound given the large number of turbulent years separating figures like Plato (5th/4th centuries BCE) and Quintilian (1st century CE).

62 Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 1.

63 Stirewalt, *Paul the Letter Writer*, 25–30.

64 Idem, 54.

65 Ibid.

66 Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 3f.; Stirewalt, *Paul the Letter Writer*, 107, though Stirewalt sees literary forms as not overlapping per se, but only in Paul’s use. This parallels Stirewalt’s argument that while Paul draws from his contemporary milieu, he does so in a unique way, an approach and conclusion that I’ve critiqued at several points.

private, and business letters in papyri.”⁶⁷ He notes that “many of these letters were written by scribes, who received training in the proper ways to compose letters.”⁶⁸ Doty then provides a host of other letter types (business, official, public, formal apologetic, pseudonymous, novelistic) that, while useful for understanding varieties of ancient epistolography, notably lack similarities with Paul’s letters in literary style or conceptual content beyond basic introductory and/or closing formulae. Doty’s final category is what he calls the “discursive letter”, a second-order category on the opposite end of the spectrum from the private letter, and in form closest to the essay (another second-order category). These comprise scientific writings as well as “paraenetic-didactic letters”, the letters explaining ‘how to live’, e.g., Seneca’s letter to Lucilius. The two parts to this final category are interesting, for the work of Rydbeck⁶⁹ and others⁷⁰ have argued for analogues between Paul’s language and the language of scientific prose writers, and though I have noted where Rydbeck’s account needs expansion and modification, many scholars have now acknowledged the philosophical-paraenetic language present in Paul.⁷¹

But what do we make of the length of Paul’s letters and Paul’s combinations of certain rhetorical and philosophical features, both qualities that have led many scholars to conclude Paul and his letters were unique?⁷² Doty points us to the work of Stirewalt, who frames Paul’s writings as “letter-essays” by

67 Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 3.

68 Ibid.

69 Rydbeck, *Fachprosa*.

70 H.Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1995), following Rydbeck.

71 The bibliography here is large and growing; a few representative examples: D. Aune, M. Dibelius, A.J. Malherbe, S.K. Stowers. For wider discussion of the history of the question and bibliography see the essays in J. Starr and T. Engberg-Pedersen, eds., *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004). The conceptual frame of *paraenesis* is an example of an element of textual content and social purpose that might be fruitfully deployed to delineate texts for potential overlaps in form and authorial social location. I suspect such a study would reveal many overlaps with my own work and proposed socio-literary sphere, though how to define and apply the concept remains a point of some dispute. *Paraenesis* does have the advantage of being a concept that seems to straddle the categories of form, content, social purpose, and authorial location, and one that can usefully cut across other essentialized categories such as ‘Jewish’, ‘Greek’, or ‘Christian’ literature. For a broader application, however, we find that deploying it as a second-order category is useful and perhaps even necessary, as we see Popkes’ essay in the Starr and Engberg-Pedersen volume seeking a re-definition of the term before applying it to the New Testament.

72 E.g., M. Reiser, Stirewalt, and others, discussed here and in chapter one.

comparing the works of Epicurus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Plutarch, and 2 *Maccabees*.⁷³ Letter-essays are a subgenre, Doty argues, a hybrid between the personal letter, official letter, and extended treatise with a more extensive range of topics and pronounced epistolary features.⁷⁴ Though Paul shows some differences from these other works—for example Doty writes that Paul “did not write dogma of the sort represented by the Epicurean letters”⁷⁵—Paul would have picked up on certain features through the use of handbooks. Paul’s basic form adheres to that of handbooks, with an opening, a thanksgiving/blessing, the body of the letter, a paraenetic section, and a close.⁷⁶ Doty’s comments in some sense accord with his earlier conclusions on courtly training: letters were not necessarily composed by rhetoricians of the highest training but by those with specialized compositional training who had knowledge of certain rhetorical conventions and conceptual tropes but had a different education than that espoused by someone like Quintilian. Thus in these personal, private, and business letters we find “formalized and stylized phrases” and a “limited variety of stock phrases and a very definite letter form.”⁷⁷

Though Doty and Stirewalt deserve credit for their approaches that identify a host of comparanda, epistolary and otherwise, for Paul’s letters, I have a few objections to their accounts. First, most of the similarities identified between Paul’s letters and these other letter-types focus on openings and closings, a focus that is limited and misleading because it ignores the content and style

73 See Doty’s discussion in *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 8f. Stirewalt’s category of ‘letter-essay’ has been picked up by some recent scholars, e.g., R.N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul’s Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011). Though I think that the category of ‘letter-essay’ is useful, letters by definition in the ancient world entailed stylistic flexibility in their composition, suggesting that we should not see letters written by people like Paul and Seneca as a special sub-type but merely part and parcel of the overall epistolary landscape.

74 Note some conceptual and structural parallels with Deissmann’s division between letters and epistles, discussed in chapter one, a conceptualization often and rightfully critiqued.

75 Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 26. I here disagree with Doty, seeing Paul and an Epicurean like Philodemus sharing not specific elements of dogma but sharing dogma more broadly conceived, which is to say they both forward particular claims regarding gods and the cosmos that have ethical ramifications for their audience.

76 Idem, 27. This corrects an earlier view voiced by Friedrich Köster, who saw Paul as largely Jewish, a common and incorrect construction of difference between Jewish form/content and Greek form/content. See F. Köster, “Ob St. Paulus seine Sprache an der des Demosthenes gebildet habe?,” *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 27 (1854) 305–322; this was also picked up by Deissmann, who saw no real formal arrangement within Paul’s letters.

77 Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 5.

of the bulk of Paul's letters. Many of the comparanda provided by Doty and Stirewalt (e.g., Epicurus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Plutarch, 2 *Maccabees*), as a result, do not look very much like Paul's letters at all when we move beyond formulaic openings and closings. Doty largely ignores, for example, the shorter, more hortatory, and personal letters, such as we find in Pliny, Seneca, and Cicero, whose style and content more closely aligns with Paul's letters.⁷⁸ Though their comparanda have some potential to further flesh out my socio-literary map (especially Seneca and Pliny, both of whom I discussed in chapter one as ripe for textual reconsideration), the rest of the suggested authors (Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Epicurus, Horace, Quintilian, and Apollonius of Tyana) stand a huge distance from Paul in time (some centuries apart), literary style (such as personifying a classicizing, aristocratic-rhetorical style, such as Quintilian and Demosthenes), and content (the criteria are far too vague to be useful, such as "legal"). The suggestion of the papyri—despite their utility for understanding types of ancient literacy and language—merits skepticism for the same reason, as the content and style in the body of these types of letters substantially differ from what we find in Paul's letters.

This fundamental methodological critique can be extended to many comparisons of Paul's letters with other forms of epistolography and/or other types of literature (e.g., 2 *Maccabees*, a popular comparandum). Most comparisons of Paul's letters focus on their openings and closings,⁷⁹ ignoring the huge issue of the content and literary style in the letters' bodies.⁸⁰ This has been addressed

78 See discussion and bibliography pertaining to Seneca's and Cicero's letter-writing in Klauck, *Ancient Letter Writing*, 156–174.

79 As additional representative example is G.A. Gerhard, "Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des griechischen Briefes," *Philologus* 64 (1905) 27–65, who focuses his work on messenger formulae of the Old Testament. Some scholars focus on Jewish epistolography, an attempt to find a specifically Jewish voice or style for Paul that I've critiqued previously. Nonetheless, I do think that studies of different types of letters and regions of letter-production can be productive for filling out our understanding of both epistolography and Paul's writings. For a good starting point, with useful bibliography and catalogue of Hebrew letters from the 7th century BCE to the 2nd century CE, see D.J. Pardee, D. Whitehead, and P.E. Dion, "An Overview of Ancient Hebrew Epistolography," *JBL* 97.3 (September 1978) 321–346, a laudably cautious approach about both our ability to distill letters from the Hebrew Bible and their applicability to the study of New Testament letters such as Paul's, arguing instead on their utility for the study of Aramaic and other "ancient near eastern letters," 323.

80 A exception is J.L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in the Non-Literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle* (SBLDS 2; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972), though as I've noted, the non-literary papyri, while illuminating for

from a methodological perspective,⁸¹ but part of my argument in the present study is that the nature of the content and style throughout the letters' bodies are crucial to any literary comparison. Indeed, I find the content and style in the letters' bodies to be much more important to describing, classifying, and comparing Paul's letters than any discussion of epistolary openings and closings. This critique highlights how simply concluding along the lines of "Paul was a letter writer" can be supplemented and pushed even further conceptually, all the more so given that my stylistic analysis supports an overlap with texts from Epictetus and Philodemus, both authors whose extant writings do not include letters, though they did likely write them.

Further, the categories provided by Doty and Stirewalt to explain texts such as Paul's and Seneca's letters—the "discursive letter" or the "letter-essay"—ignores ancient thinking about genres of writing and letters.⁸² As Stowers and others have pointed out, there were specific categories for types of writing, such as *paraenesis*, that should take precedence over the second-order epistolary categories of Doty and Stirewalt, which seem to be loosely derived from Bultmann's initial (and since rejected) differentiation between letters and epistles.⁸³ Ancient epistolary theory, furthermore, didn't think of letters only or even primarily in terms of their openings and closings but rather in their compositional context, content, and the purpose the author was trying to achieve. Thus the flexibility inherent in epistolography as an ancient textual medium explains Paul's epistolary closes that Doty claims are unique.⁸⁴ My own schema of socio-literary spheres better reflects ancient theorizing on textual production, including epistolography, which placed an emphasis on context and purpose by foregrounding these elements in my definition of these spheres. I am not opposed to the provision of second-order categories, as my own theorization has shown; rather, I am opposed to these second order categories that ignore the parameters and practices of ancient literary thinkers and text producers.

I would also disagree with Doty when he provides a host of suggestions for particular lenses through which we might read and understand Paul, which

a study of language during Paul's time, look very little like Paul's letters in terms of literary style, content, and social purpose.

81 Stowers, *Letter Writing*.

82 See discussion in, e.g., Stowers, *Letter Writing*.

83 Bultmann's differentiation continues to remain influential, despite early and wide critiques, e.g., in J.A. Fitzmyer, "Some Notes on Aramaic Epistolography," *JBL* 93 (1974) 201–225.

84 Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 39–40.

I find to be largely anachronistic and stem from theological-apologetic concerns: homiletics and liturgy,⁸⁵ autobiography,⁸⁶ theology,⁸⁷ apocalypticism,⁸⁸ catechesis,⁸⁹ confession,⁹⁰ hymnography,⁹¹ and judgment.⁹² Such categories also seem to have little utility in attempts to describe and compare in transparent, empirical fashions. We see, for example, wide disagreements about how to define categories like apocalyptic or liturgical content, in what are ultimately competing subjective judgments.

I do, however, find utility in Doty's (not new) recommendations regarding the category of ethics broadly⁹³ and *paraenesis* specifically,⁹⁴ the latter of which

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- 85 See esp. R. Jewett, "The Form and Function of the Homiletic Benediction," *Anglican Theological Review* 51 (1969) 18–34. See also B. Rigaux, *The Letters of St. Paul* (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968).
- 86 Rigaux, *The Letters of St. Paul*.
- 87 J.T. Sanders, "Paul's 'Autobiographical' Statements in Galatians 1–2," *JBL* 85 (1966) 335–343.
- 88 J.G. Gager, Jr., "Functional Diversity in Paul's Use of End-Time Language," *JBL* 89 (1970) 325–337; A.N. Wilder, "The Rhetoric of Ancient and Modern Apocalyptic," *Interpretation* 25 (1971) 436–453.
- 89 P. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Catechism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940).
- 90 V.H. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (Leiden: Brill, 1963).
- 91 G. Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymen* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965).
- 92 C. Roetzel, "The Judgment Form in Paul's Letters," *JBL* 88 (1969) 305–312.
- 93 See, e.g., B.S. Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," *JBL* 51 (1932): 1–12; H.-D. Wendland, *Ethik des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970); E.A. Judge, "St. Paul and Classical Society," in *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays* (ed. E.A. Judge and D.M. Scholer; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008 [1972]); Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 48f.
- 94 See, e.g., the many essays in Starr and Engberg-Pedersen, *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, and E. Kamlah, *Die Form der katalogischen Paränese im Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1964). Both works highlight the complexity of the concept and its range of interpretive possibilities when applied to Paul and the New Testament more widely. The first two essays in Starr and Engberg-Pedersen, in particular, point to a dissatisfaction with how the term has been previously applied and suggest clarifications of definition and methodology. It needs to be noted with respect to the Kamlah's volume, however, that he argues that Paul's letters should be likened to the Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran. As I showed in chapter four, however, a stylistic comparison of Paul's letters and the *Damascus Document*, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, reveals that a text like the *Damascus Document* is not the best comparandum for Paul's letters, despite some interesting conceptual overlaps. I find this fact unsurprising, given that the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls seem to have been fairly secluded and as a result produced texts apart from the socio-literary context, such as participating in loose literary networks, that informed the ongoing education and textual production of authors like Paul, Epictetus,

in particular has been a productive avenue for Pauline scholars. Other scholars have argued instead for using the concept of *protrepsis*,⁹⁵ slightly different from *paraenesis*, though the division is mainly a modern, second-order distinction that is mostly absent in the ancient material.⁹⁶ In either case, a comparison of stylistics as I undertook in chapter four would, I think, be useful when looking to other *paraenetic-protreptic* material roughly contemporary to Paul, such as the so-called Cynic Epistles.⁹⁷ Margaret Mitchell intriguingly suggests a variety of other potential paths that likewise seem fruitful: “*prosopopoiia*, *logoi* (speeches, in Acts), *parekbasis*, *ekphrasis*, *enthymeme*, *paradeigma*, *inclusio*, *apologia*, *epainos/encomium*, *psogos*, *synkrisis*, *logos protreptikos*, *topos*, oracle, prophecy.”⁹⁸

My own analyses of authors like Epictetus and Philodemus have convinced me that such authors and certain of their works are the closest comparanda for Paul's letters, though I am open to evidence to the contrary in the form of demonstrations of other, more similar texts. Thus my textual analysis seems to confirm the conclusions of Poster, Malherbe, and other scholars detailed above that characterize Paul's education as a limited, bureaucratic sort. This type of education would have exposed Paul to certain rhetorical and philosophical tropes and provided a firm grounding in grammatical and compositional

and Philodemus. It is not religious or ethnic affiliation, in other words, that informs an author's or text's particular style, but rather the contextual specifics of things like education, social purpose, and socio-literary networks.

- 95 Most recently in R.N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011). Longenecker's book deserves credit for focusing his structural-epistolary analysis of the body of the work, unlike many scholars who focus only on the beginnings and endings of Paul's letters and on that basis attempt to liken them to other contemporary letter types.
- 96 For further discussion see especially Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 92; Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 121–127; D.M. Swancutt, “Paraenesis in Light of Protrepsis,” in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, 113–156.
- 97 A.J. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977); E. Mûseler and M. Sicherl, *Die Kynikerbriefe* (2 vols.; Paderborn: Schöningh, 1994); R.B. Branham and M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, eds., *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1996). Some scholars have fruitfully argued that Cynics provide an especially close analogy for Paul's rhetorical strategies or social practices. For the former see, e.g., A.J. Malherbe, “‘Gentle as a Nurse’: The Cynic Background to I Thess ii,” *NovT* 12.2 (1970) 203–217; for the latter see, e.g., F.G. Downing, *Cynics, Paul, and the Pauline Churches* (London; New York: Psychology Press, 1998).
- 98 Mitchell, “Le style, c'est l'homme,” 377.

knowledge.⁹⁹ Paul would have easily been able to pen letters, even lengthy and complex ones, which incorporated a variety of stylistic elements and allowed for substantial creativity.

Yet this bureaucratic-specific type of reading alone does not explain Paul's deployment of Judaeon affiliation, social practice, and use of the Septuagint. Nor does it explain Paul's use of philosophical concepts, words, and understandings. As I've argued, we must think of a variety of types of specific education, ranging from aristocratic, classicizing-rhetorical to bureaucratic-epistolary to technical-scientific, and so forth.

Paul's claims to Judaeon affiliation suggest that his knowledge of the Septuagint could have plausibly arisen within a Judaeon household (e.g., as the son of one or more Judaeon freedmen) or through study with a Judaeon teacher (e.g., similar to Epictetus' education under Musonius Rufus). This is a significant departure from, and I believe corrective of, many scholars who understand education in terms of systems of formal, often rhetorical, schools.¹⁰⁰ I acknowledge both the wide existence and importance of these schools, but think (with Poster) that the focus on formal schools teaching rhetorical theory

99 This general conclusion is gaining currency, but it is not new. I suggested a couple older scholars in chapter one (e.g., Heinrici) who thought similarly, and we could add other examples of work that makes this point explicit, e.g., J. Weiss, *Die Aufgaben der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft in der Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1908). Weiss specifically recommends Epictetus and Seneca for comparison, as well as others that I find less useful based on differences in form, content, social purpose, and social location of author: Plutarch, Lucian, Musonius Rufus, Marcus Aurelius, and Cicero. A couple of these are nonetheless valuable suggestions, especially insofar as certain of these authors provide informal discussions of ethics within a general philosophical system (Musonius Rufus' lectures and Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*) or hortatory letters (Cicero) that, at least on a conceptual and general structural basis, seem fairly close to Paul's letters.

100 A sample of scholars I reference in the present study who have weighed in on Paul's education: H.D. Betz, M. Hengel, R. Hock, A.J. Malherbe, J. Murphy-O'Connor, A. Pitts, S.E. Porter, B. Witherington III. Most of these scholars laudably recognize that the formal, three-tiered system outlined by Marrou (and ancient theorists such as Quintilian) does not reflect the tremendous historical variations, but nonetheless continue to focus on formal institutions of learning. Hengel, for example, in his *Pre-Christian Paul*, focuses on the advanced rhetoric of Nicolaus of Damascus, present in Herod's court, and draws an opposition with what he sees for Paul, who did not receive traditional, rhetorical education. Again, we find an overly-strong focus on formal, rhetorical schooling at the expense of the huge variety of other types and contexts for education.

(and/or the Greek language)¹⁰¹ overlooks the huge variety of types and contexts for education and learning in the ancient world that can frame Paul's own education in a way that is more nuanced, more reflective of on-the-ground complexities, and also doesn't rely on the historically problematic account in *Acts*.

Paul's knowledge of philosophical concepts, words, and understandings—which comprise both broader cosmological understandings as well as ethics—could have arisen from his study of the Septuagint, from additional familial or ad hoc education with those who were philosophically knowledgeable, or both. Paul could plausibly have learned much through informal discussion and listening to others, Judaeans and gentile, with whom he interacted during his life.¹⁰² Other people that he mentions, such as Apollos or his patrons,¹⁰³ could well have had specific knowledge of the Septuagint or other philosophical ideas and/or could have had close social ties to others who had such knowledge. Paul traveled widely and had a seemingly large and varied social network, and thus we can safely assume that much of this knowledge was available to him over a period of the many years he taught, if it had not already been available within a familial- or bureaucratic-educational setting during his early years. Though the account I've just detailed must remain tentative, it seems the most plausible reconstruction given the form and content of Paul's letters. Ultimately, the probability of exposure is more important than the precise source, especially when such concepts were widely available.¹⁰⁴

101 See discussion in, e.g., Pitts, "Hellenistic Schools," 35f. Pitts' argument, and its scholarly predecessors, is representative of a position that uses later rabbinic evidence and models of education to posit formal, religious and linguistic instruction for Jews at a very early date. The ancient Mediterranean evidence, as I've argued in this chapter, not only reflects a much more wide-ranging and complex reality, but we also do not have comparable evidence for other groups undertaking this type of education.

102 Thom, although settling on what I think is a too formal understanding of Paul's education, nonetheless concludes that advanced education "may well have included exposure to popular-philosophical texts, since these were aimed at readers with a general education rather than formal training in science or philosophy," 57–58 in "Paul and Popular Philosophy."

103 For a partial expansion of this view, see C. Mihaila, *The Paul Apollos Relationship and Paul's Stance Toward Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2009).

104 Thom, "Paul and Popular Philosophy," concludes thusly: "It is not possible, I think, to determine exactly where New Testament authors and their readers encountered these popular-philosophical elements. Some may have come across such ideas as part of their

Broader Implications: Education and Social Location

The types of conclusions I am providing here about epistolography as a flexible medium (e.g., Paul incorporated content from the Septuagint and conceptual paradigms derived from Greco-Roman philosophical systems) also have implications for re-thinking education. I suggested at a couple points that the three-tiered educational system prescribed by ancient theorists such as Quintilian, influentially outlined by Marrou, and largely followed by scholars such as Malherbe draws too firm a demarcation around and between these different levels. Indeed, other accounts argue that these levels could be combined¹⁰⁵ or undertaken in other flexible ways.¹⁰⁶

Even these accounts, however, largely treat ancient education solely within the formal, institutional-school framework that best describes, and seems to be derived from, a certain type of aristocratic-classicizing rhetorical education, such as prescribed by Quintilian, and which I and some others have argued little applies to someone like Paul. We should take our cue from more nuanced treatments of ancient education that shift the focus away from the dichotomy of highly-literate/illiterate to intermediary levels of literacy.¹⁰⁷ Education could and often did occur within the home, via an educated slave or freedman attached to the household, or by private tutor. The accounts of Marrou, Malherbe, and others overlook these other important settings for education, where things like specialized religious education, such as the Septuagint, could have been taught.¹⁰⁸

education, others through their contact with Hellenistic Judaism, others more informally. This question is less important than recognizing that these elements did indeed form part of their cultural repertoire and that New Testament texts have to be interpreted against this background," 73–74.

105 E.g., Nilsson, *Die hellenistische Schule*.

106 E.g., Kaster, "Notes."

107 So Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 5: "we should at least try to avoid an excessively sharp polarity of literacy and illiteracy. At least we must concern ourselves with a category of *semi-literates*, persons who can write slowly or not at all, and who can read without begin able to read complex or very lengthy texts." Harris also reminds us that "semi-literates are inevitably an amorphous group," 5, a fact whose historical messiness we should embrace in any socio-historical reconstruction. See also his discussion on schooling and literacy at 233f.

108 Porter and Pitts, "Paul's Bible," for example, argue that Paul's formal schooling in Jerusalem "would have in some ways been the equivalent of taking the rhetorical training of the Greco-Roman schools," 35. Again we find a reliance on models of formal schools found in Marrou and Malherbe.

The evidence from epistolography in particular shows that education in the ancient world was a highly complex thing, and that only a tiny percentage of people partook of the type of education prescribed by Quintilian and outlined by Marrou.¹⁰⁹ How most education practically manifested took a variety of forms apart from Quintilian's ideal, and literacy was taught in a variety of ways and at a variety of levels.¹¹⁰ Other types of education pertaining to specific types of literacy also existed, such as we find in bureaucratic settings or with regard to specialized knowledge such as medicine or other technical subjects. The huge amount of evidence for literacy—encompassing business documents (accounts, contracts, etc.), letters (both business and personal), papyri fragments, ostraca, graffiti, and epigraphy—paints a hugely complex picture of ancient literacy and, by extension, ancient education and literary practice.¹¹¹

It seems that people in the ancient Mediterranean were educated at a variety of levels, through both formal and informal means, and in a variety of ways. While those capable of writing documents as sophisticated as Paul's letters were likely a very small percentage, evidence that changes how we understand Paul in his socio-literary environment also allows us to re-think ancient education in a way that reflects its on-the-ground complexities and the social world more broadly. We can thus move beyond the narrow, but common,

109 Harris argues that this configuration only arose in the second century, 234, citing Apul. *Flor.* 20.3; SHA *Marc.* 2.2–4; *Verus* 2.5.

110 R. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001) and Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996). Cribiore's work, though geographically limited, does an excellent job collecting the data showing a variety of levels of literacy and education as well as usefully reviewing the major questions of education as they have manifested in scholarship. It merits mention, furthermore, that many scholars believe Roman Egypt to be representative of realities in terms of education and literacy in the wider Empire: N. Lewis, "The Romanity of Roman Egypt: A Growing Consensus," *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Naples: Napoli, 1984) 1077–1084; D.W. Rathbone, "The Ancient Economy and Graeco-Roman Egypt," *Egitto e storia antica: Dall'ellenismo all'età, araba* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1989) 159–176; R.S. Bagnall, *Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History* (London: Routledge, 1995); H.M. Cotton, W.E.H. Cockle, and F.G.B. Millar, "Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey," *JRS* 85 (1995) 214–235; see also discussion in Pitts, "Hellenistic Schools," 21f., following Harris, *Ancient Literacy*.

111 Greg Woolf concludes that "the Roman world was once awash with documents is also clear, even if hardly any have survived," in G. Woolf, "Literacy or Literacies in Rome?," in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (ed. W.A. Johnson and H.N. Parker; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 46. See in particular the foregrounding of these types of writing in Bagnall, *Everyday Writing*.

focus on literacy and literacy rate, which, as Roger Bagnall notes, “is only one relevant factor, and not the most interesting at that,” suggesting a focus on “characterizing social systems in which the use of writing and written texts are embedded.”¹¹² My language of spheres that integrates a text’s form, content, social purpose, and the social location of the author, all within the broader ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman milieu is an attempt to do just that, to move beyond more narrow considerations of literacy to wider social systems such as Paul’s shared practices.

Finally, education existed along a wide continuum and took place in many different forms and venues. Specific types of education were undertaken for specific purposes, such as letter-writing within a bureaucratic setting, basic letters for the a base level of literacy allowing the signing of one’s own name, or advanced rhetorical training for public declamations. These varying, specific types of education also highlight the fact that, despite this wide continuum of education and literacy, there was a *huge* gap between the lowest and highest levels of education, such as between someone who could sign their name and someone who could pen sophisticated literature like *Romans* or the *Panathenaicus*. Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus all gained at least a certain level of education allowing for sophisticated composition, but then were further instructed in specific domains of knowledge. Thus, much like above where I detailed specific constituent parts to status by which we can describe and characterize these different authors, we should also be aware of different domains of specific knowledge education.

For Epictetus and Philodemus, this took the form of philosophy, specifically the instruction with a philosopher (Musonius Rufus and Zeno of Sidon, respectively), and the reading of specific philosophical works (Chrysippus and Epicurus, respectively, among many others). For Paul, this took the form of the study of the Septuagint, presumably from a Judean in some (semi?) formal capacity, but which was likely augmented through personal study of the text and discussions with others (Judean and/or Gentile) who had some knowledge of the Septuagint and/or Greco-Roman philosophy, such as Apollos or any number of his patrons, members of their household, and/or members of his network/audience. This type of advanced, domain-specific knowledge was common in the ancient world, and was attained through both formal study and ad hoc additions such as personal study, private tutoring, or work with others possessing this knowledge.¹¹³

112 Bagnall, *Everyday Writing*, 2.

113 Some scholars have argued that Paul’s Septuagint-specific education arose from a situation where, after preliminary education in a grammar school, he undertook advanced

Thus we find other of my proposed socio-literary types defined by particular domains of specialized knowledge: advanced, classicizing rhetoric; ethics, cosmology, and group construction; scientific-technical literature, which had a host of sub-domains (mathematics, botany, medicine, astronomy, etc.); and so forth. We can also identify certain connections between the type of knowledge and the type of person who regularly sought that type of domain-specific education. Aristocrats from families deeply involved in wider politics would seek for their children advanced, classicizing rhetorical training. A Judean such as Paul would seek, or have sought for him by his parents or head of household, knowledge of the Septuagint from one with this type of knowledge, be it a family member or tutor of some kind.¹¹⁴

As with other ancient education, the presence of Jewish or Torah learning centers in the ancient world is the subject of wide dispute, ranging from

literacy training using Judean Scriptures (in Greek) instead of Homer, e.g., Porter and Pitts, "Paul's Bible," a position derived from B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity, with Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998 [1961, 1964]) esp. 56–66, 89–92. Again, this type of account seems far too formalized in its understanding of schools, and the evidence for such schools for Judeans appears notably after Paul's time, but such a reconstruction is nonetheless interesting, despite not meriting the definitive assertions of scholars such as Pitts, "Hellenistic Schools," 33–34: "The more advanced types of instruction found in the city [Jerusalem] would have undoubtedly been rabbinical institutions and Jewish wisdom schools, which no one doubts Paul had access to. These initial assumptions are confirmed by literary and material evidence," with reference to Collins, *Jewish Wisdom* and Hengel, *Hellenization*. We simply do not have the evidence of formal, "rabbinical institutions and Jewish wisdom schools" asserted here. For discussion of Judean schooling, see C. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

- 114 I disagree with scholars who argue for formal, institutionalized schools of rabbinic knowledge or Jewish wisdom during Paul's time, due to the lack of good evidence for his time-period; see discussion and references in previous footnote, as well as discussion and argument in Pitts, "Hellenistic Schools," 33–34, who notes, somewhat contrary to his previous argument about Paul and Jewish schools but along the lines of what I argue for education such as the Septuagint, that "education was primarily a private endeavor undertaken within the home or among small gatherings. Significant public standardization of the Jewish educational school system does not appear to take place until the second century AD." For Jewish education around Paul's time, see: N. Drazin, *History of Jewish Education from 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1940); E. Ebner, *Elementary Education in Ancient Israel during the Tannaitic Period (10–220 C.E.)* (New York: Bloch, 1956); W. Bacher, "Das altjüdische Schulwesen," *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* 6 (1903) 48–81.

minimalist¹¹⁵ to maximalist approaches.¹¹⁶ Useful work has been done in this field to situate the problem and evidence¹¹⁷ as well as to methodologically ground socio-historical analysis.¹¹⁸ To briefly generalize and attempt to distill a complex, wide-ranging debate, it seems plausible that there were opportunities for the targeted study of Jewish Scripture in several regions of the ancient Mediterranean, especially and unsurprisingly in and around the Levant. Again, we needn't think of these as formal schools or centers of learning but can think of them instead as available in ad hoc ways, such as individual knowledge specialists attached to households and places of worship or learning.¹¹⁹ We might well seek analogues, in fact, in the wide geographical distribution, type of educational offerings, and individual education of both the *grammatici* (teachers of intermediate reading/writing) as well as Greco-Roman, philosophical knowledge-specialists, such as Epictetus.

We can find other examples of those also seeking domain-specific knowledge. Those seeking and producing scientific-technical literature seem to have come from a wide social spectrum, from highly educated wealthy and elite figures (e.g., Galen), to those with education and means but who relied on wealthy patrons (the Library of Alexandria, for example, seems to have subsidized substantial amount of thinkers with domain-specific scientific-technical knowledge such as Hero of Alexandria),¹²⁰ to freedmen and tradespeople either

115 E.g., S. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Z. Safrai, "Rabbinic Sources as Historical: A Response to Professor Neusner," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity III* (ed. J. Neusner, A.J. Avery-Peck, and B. Chilton; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 143–167; see also S. Safrai, "Elementary Education, Its Religious and Social Significance in the Talmudic Period," *Cahiers D'Histoire Mondiale* 11 (1968) 148–169.

116 E.g., A. Oppenheimer, *Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 2007).

117 J.D. Shaye Cohen, "Epigraphical Rabbis," *JQR* 72 (1981–1982) 1–17.

118 C. Hezser, *The Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997); H. Lapin, "The Origins and the Development of the Rabbinic Movement in the Land of Israel," in *The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (ed. S.T. Katz; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 206–229; S.S. Miller, *Sages and Commoners in Late Antique 'Ereš Israel: A Philological Inquiry into Local Traditions in Talmud Yerushalmi* (TSAJ 111; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

119 A point of departure from certain scholarship on ancient Jewish education that approaches the matter in formal, institutional terms, much as we see for Greco-Roman ancient Mediterranean education more broadly; see discussion and notes above. For a recent such approach, see B.Z. Rosenfeld, *Torah Centers and Rabbinic Activity in Palestine 70–400 C.E.: History and Geographic Distribution, Review of Biblical Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

120 We have evidence for libraries both big and small, though their relative influence on book culture and literary networks is the subject of dispute. See discussion in Porter and Pitts,

attached to a household or some type of guild, or who practiced their craft independently. The building of bridges, for example, was typically a civic-sponsored activity done under the supervision of the local magistrate's bureaucracy, which included freedmen or slaves with specialized training in stonecutting, building, and engineering. Certain other specialized knowledge-domains, such as medicine, astrology, and any number of sub-domains in divination (interpretation of dreams, entrails, bird-flights, etc.) or magic (curse tablets, love charms, etc.) were even more blurry in their social composition, sometimes being sanctioned by certain schools, guilds, or political groups, but at many other times and places being the province of individual entrepreneurs for whom historical reconstruction is difficult but who appear widely in the literary data.

These different domains of knowledge were also subject to different evaluative judgments as to their validity or utility. As discussed with regard to status, status can be objective, accorded, or subjective. The same, I think, is also true for education: a high-level magistrate might think that a Judaeon with deep knowledge of the Septuagint has useless knowledge because they lack true *paideia* (traditional education regarding aristocratic culture and values),¹²¹ while figures with domain-specific education such as Paul may well accord little status to a public speaker with an aristocratic, classicizing-rhetorical education. Certain Greco-Roman philosophers were well-known for their indifference or antipathy toward certain other spheres of knowledge (e.g., Epicureans regarding geometry and rhetoric), while an engineer such as Hero of Alexandria might have thought subjects such as rhetoric, philosophy, and religion to all pale before mathematics. We could even demarcate types of education based not on the subject of education, but on the type of person being educated, comparing the format, method, and subject of education based on the same categories I used above for status, such as wealth, class, sex/gender, and

"Paul's Bible," 22f., drawing from F.G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932) esp. 65, and A. Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

121 Porter and Pitts, "Paul's Bible," suggest a formal, Septuagintal schooling as the Jewish equivalent to Greco-Roman *paideia*. Though a useful argument for showing how different social contexts entailed different domains of knowledge and types of education, *paideia* was formal training for the small percentage of people that comprised the urban aristocracy, while study of the Septuagint as sacred text did not seem to fulfill the same role. Nonetheless, this conclusion is not entirely far from my own, especially as expressed by Pitts, "Hellenistic Schools," 43, who suggests the "possibility of an adapted Jewish form of Hellenistic education in first-century Jerusalem that taught Greek and used the Septuagint as the central curricular basis instead of Homer and the other poets." Again, I suggest something on the less formal side, but I do not find this suggestion implausible.

ethnicity.¹²² The main thing to remember when demarcating these categories is whether they have descriptive and/or explanatory utility when framing people and texts like Paul and his letters.

I have shown that we are best served by understanding Paul apart from the categories of rhetorician or lower-class “common man.” Yet the extensive and close similarities I have shown between Paul’s letters and certain texts by Epictetus and Philodemus suggest that conceiving of Paul as simply a “letter-writer”, while useful, is insufficient for accounting for wider textual and conceptual qualities Paul shared with certain other writers. My language of socio-literary spheres shares with the characterization of “letter-writer” an inclusion of, and fundamental link between, textual elements and social components, showing how an author in the ancient Mediterranean with a certain type of education, social position, and social purpose wrote in certain types of ways. An adequate description of these writings requires attention to both content and form, and my prior discussion of literary studies, media theory, and linguistic anthropology has shown how the link between content, form, and social purpose was implicitly understood and re-inscribed by authors sharing a social context.

I’ve argued that I do not think that Paul consciously attempted to write in a fashion similar to what we find in authors such as Epictetus and Philodemus.

122 Certain overlaps among these categories would be more common, such as wealth and class. For ethnicity, I am here proposing as most likely that Paul received an additional domain-specific type of education (in the Septuagint) that reflected his particular ethnic-religious affiliation. The subject of women and education, meanwhile, is one beset by tantalizingly few pieces of evidence. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, discusses the cases of Sappho and the comments of Plato and Aristotle that suggest that wealthy, upper-class women likely had wide access to substantial amounts of education in ancient Greece. Harris points to substantial circumstantial evidence, such as vases depicting women holding writing tablets and the scripts of comedies that indisputably indicate fairly advanced education for some women. For the time-period closer to Paul in the Late Republic, Harris provides a circumstantial case that many women of households with means were educated, discussing the need for such an education given their responsibility for running large households as well as the evidence that many women seem to have been widely engaged in finance and business. The tentative picture emerges of low levels of education among poor and rural women with fairly advanced education amongst the urban wealthy and social elite, essentially mirroring what we find for men, though Harris argues that it is nonetheless likely that women were, on the whole, educated less widely and to a lesser degree than men. For further contextual discussion of women in the ancient world, a starting point is S.L. James and S. Dillon, eds., *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012), see esp. the essay “Women, Education, and Philosophy” by M. Deslauriers, 343–353.

Rather, Paul learned certain implicit conventions in the course of his literary education that could involve formal instruction, reading (or hearing) a variety of other texts in general circulation, or participating in loose, literary networks.¹²³ The conventions specific to a particular socio-literary sphere could be implicit or explicit and were derived from particular compositional contexts and social purposes reproduced and re-inscribed over time,¹²⁴ a finding that also accords with the advice in ancient manuals on epistolography.

Paul was likely educated, in other words, in a bureaucratic and/or informal piecemeal fashion that exposed him to different literary conventions and rhetorical-conceptual tropes.¹²⁵ Scholars differ on the precise form that this took, with opinions ranging from basic instruction (and possibly beyond) with an intermediate teacher of letters (*grammaticus*) and supplemented with some epistolary and advanced rhetorical exercises (so Stanley Stowers) to “a Jewish school that taught in Greek and made extensive use of the Greek translation of the Bible, with very little Greek literature in the curriculum” (so E.P. Sanders).¹²⁶

123 For the production and distribution of books in both socio-literary networks and in the society more broadly, see the extensive discussion in Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 222f., who points to a host of primary and secondary sources confirming this reality. For further discussion and bibliography, see R.J. Starr, “The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World,” *CQ* 37.1 (1987) 213–223; E.J. Kenney, “Books and Readers in the Roman World,” in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature* (ed. E.J. Kenney; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 2:3–32; T. Kleberg, *Buchhandel und Verlagswesen in der Antike* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967); Johnson and Parker, *Ancient Literacies*.

124 This point is occasionally picked up by biblical scholars, e.g., W.L. Wonderly, “Some Principles of ‘Common-Language’ Translation,” *Bible Translator* 21 (1970) 126–137.

125 So also Vegge, *Paulus und das antike Schulwesen*, 367, who sees Paul’s language as reflecting not his upbringing in a Greek-speaking household (a point I strongly dispute) but rather a particular level of educational attainment: “Die Sprache in den Briefen des Paulus spiegelt folglich nicht die seines Mutterhauses; seine ‘meisterhafte Beherrschung’ [M. Hengel, “Der vorchristliche Paulus,” 223] der griechischen Sprache belebt hingegen seinen Bildungserfolg.” Vegge envisions a more formal sort of education for Paul than I have in mind, but we share an understanding about how particular types of education lead to facility with particular types of writing. Of course, differences on the exact nature of Paul’s education are to be expected and further specifics are, as Vegge himself notes, matters of assumption. Nonetheless, our assumptions and conclusions can and will be measured in terms of relative plausibility and explanatory elegance. See more discussion, to which Vegge responds, in T. Schmeller, *Schulen im Neuen Testament?: zur Stellung des Urchristentums in der Bildungswelt seiner Zeit* (Freiburg: Herder, 2001); and further T.J. Bauer, *Paulus und die kaiserzeitliche Epistolographie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

126 Sanders, “Paul between Hellenism and Judaism,” 80.

With respect to Sanders' account, I've mentioned my significant reservations about using reified categories such as 'Jewish schools' that Sanders mentions, though his account of a Judean literacy education that focused on their sacred writings (the Septuagint) instead of texts from Hellenistic epic and tragedy (Homer; Euripides) seems plausible. In support of Stowers' account, the title of *grammatici* did not necessarily indicate a teacher within a series of formal, educational levels, as some assume.¹²⁷ Both Sanders' and Stowers' accounts show how we can productively and plausibly reconstruct Paul's education in ways that depart from the formal, multi-tiered model derived from aristocratic, classicizing rhetoric. Our available evidence shows that people could gain some literary facility in a variety of alternative contexts: family, bureaucracy, business/household slave, and any number of other ad hoc supplements, formal or informal, such as sitting in on lectures or speaking with more knowledgeable members of one's social circle.¹²⁸

Such types of education seem to have been fairly common across the ancient Mediterranean, particularly in cities though this may simply be an accident of the surviving evidence. It is important to note that these different

127 Harris argues, for example, that the traditional view of formal levels and teachers needs revision: "It is only in fact from the second century AD that the sequence *litterator-grammaticus-rhetor* becomes visible," citing Apul. *Flor.* 20.3; SHA *Marc.* 2.2–4; *Verus* 2.5. The term *grammaticus*, while it traditionally referred to an official title of a teacher within the aristocratic, classicizing-rhetorical multi-tiered mode of education (see, e.g., in Diocletian's *Edictum De Pretiis Rerum Venalium*), was used extensively earlier and with a much wider range of meaning, simply a 'teacher of letters', reflecting the fact that there was tremendous variation across the ancient Mediterranean in educators and types of education. See discussion in Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 32, and C.K. Barrett, ed., *The New Testament Background: Writings from Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire that Illuminate Christians Origins* (rev. ed.; London: Harper Collins, 1995) 23–50. Harris' position corrects an earlier understanding of ancient education that, following Marrou and others, frames education and educators in formal, multi-tiered categories when, in fact, the picture was much more muddled. See, e.g., Nilsson, *Die hellenistische Schule*; R.A. Kaster, "Notes on 'Primary' and 'Secondary' Schools in Late Antiquity," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 113 (1983) 323–346; and fuller discussion in Harris, 233f.

128 See discussion in Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 233f. Josephus, an interesting and telling case, indicates his ongoing attempts to further educate himself in Greek literature after having had preliminary instruction, perhaps similar to Paul, by a *grammaticus*, something seemingly equivalent to the *progymnasmata*; see *Antiquities* 20.263. This is a good example of how we should not think of education stopping after formal instruction, but should rather think of it as a dynamic, ongoing process that depended on one's occupation, context, social circle, status, goals, and so forth.

types of education occurred within a wide continuum,¹²⁹ from laborers knowing a couple words, such as their names for signing contracts, to members of an aristocratic household receiving formal literacy-training to conduct personal and business correspondences.¹³⁰ This education could be achieved in many sorts of formal or informal venues, including the home.¹³¹

Paul also became familiar, through texts read for literacy training and/or for general edification, with the implicit understandings of a particular intersection of form, content, and social purpose that he would later deploy in his own work, and which was shared by his wider socio-literary milieu. Particular intersections of form, content, and social purpose also need not have been literary in the technical sense, as Paul could have been exposed to them through hearing declamations in places such as public squares or classrooms, the latter of which was the likely setting for Epictetus' *Discourses*. We must keep in mind, however, that there are still many things that people like Paul could not have learned purely aurally, ranging from basic knowledge such as the alphabet to more complex subjects such as sophisticated composition. It is also crucial to highlight an often-overlooked point, namely that education frequently remained ongoing for thinkers in the ancient world, as authors continued to

129 Woolf, "Literacy," 61, sees in Rome "no real fragmentation of writing practices, no specialized literacies, and the practices of writing moved easily between different genres of text," a conclusion that I think goes too far (e.g., we do have evidence of specialized scribal literacy and writing practices) but well expresses the dynamism of the concept of literacy.

130 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 7, 197f. Harris looks in particular to: Varro *RR* i.17.4; Pliny *Ep.* ix.15.1; Paulus *Dig.* xxxii.99; papyrus roll *P. Mich* xi.620 (240 AD); Cicero *De rep.* v.3.5; and Seleucus and Hermeros in Pompeii with fairly non-literate evidence. Harris concludes that most people had the knowledge of at least some extremely basic reading/writing capability. Personal names also comprise the largest and oldest category of graffiti: Woolf, "Literacy," 60. Bagnall, *Everyday Writing*, 26, argues that "[t]erms like illiterate and semi-literate are used too readily to refer to people who spelled phonetically and let the syntax of oral expression enter their writing. They were literate." Bagnall is representative of an increasingly widespread move, particularly among classicists and historians, toward understanding literacy, education, and textual production in a dynamic, flexible, complex way. This type of understanding adds both accuracy and nuance to our conceptualization of Paul in his socio-literary context.

131 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 16f. Harris specifically points to the presence of this type of education within the city, though we lack the evidence from rural areas to come to any definitive conclusions. Educated slaves, meanwhile, often taught children of wealthy or semi-wealthy parents within the home, a type of education outside the bounds of formal, rhetorical education. He cites as primary sources: Suetonius, *De gramm.* 17; Pliny, *Ep.* iii.3.3; Quintilian, *Inst.* i.2; Plutarch, *Cat. Mai.* 20; Nepos, *Att.* 1; Valerius Maximus, ii.7.6; Suetonius, *DA* 48, 64.3; cf. Cicero, *Att.* viii.4.1; see also Plautus, *Most.* 126; Heliod. *Aeth.* i.13.1.

read a wide variety of types of books, handbooks, essays, and letters.¹³² These varieties of texts were continuing sites of education and influence, of both form and content, for Paul as well as for figures like Epictetus and Philodemus. Our accounts of education should not stop, in other words, after a given author has reached adulthood and started to produce their own texts.

Epictetus was likely educated in a similar fashion to the account I sketched above for Paul. Epictetus grew up as a slave in an aristocratic household: his master was Epaphroditus, the secretary of Nero, a position that afforded high status in a number of ways. Aristocratic households sometimes included hundreds of members, and often included educated slaves or freedmen who provided tutoring and a wide variety of education to members of the immediate family or wider household. Epictetus likely gained knowledge of letters, including basic reading and writing, within such a bureaucratic/familial context, much as I surmised for Paul. Epictetus also gained specific knowledge (in his case philosophy; Paul's analogue would be the Septuagint) apart from the institutionalized, multi-tiered schooling of advanced rhetorical education, through what seems to have been formal or semi-formal schooling with the eminent philosopher Musonius Rufus. Epictetus provides evidence that one could come from one of the empire's top households and have not only a home-taught education but also study formally with a philosopher, none of which had to take a form closely paralleling what we find for aristocratic, institutionalized, advanced rhetoric.

Epictetus' knowledge of Stoicism (along with other philosophical ideas and systems), in other words, was not something that he simply picked up from the surrounding culture, but rather required dedicated, formal or semi-formal study with a specialist (Musonius Rufus). Epictetus, Paul, and Musonius Rufus, furthermore, all seem to share a willingness to support themselves with

132 Some scholars identify the importance of textual collections such as anthologies of a variety of types (biography, sayings, poetry, philosophy, rhetoric), but limit their role to formal schooling, e.g., discussion in Porter and Pitts, "Paul's Bible," 28, drawing from T. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) esp. 120–151, to identify several non-school-text anthologies as well: Ps.-Phocylides, *Menandri Sententiae*, *Sentences of Sextus*, *Distichs of Cato* and *Stobaeus*, and the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*. An understanding of education relying on formal schools or schooling ignores the utility of such texts for various other types of non-formal education: private study, study groups in literary networks, or for family, slaves, or freedmen in a semi-formal setting within the home. J. Barns, "A New Gnomologium: With Some Remarks on Gnomonic Anthologies, II," *CQ NS* 1 (1951) 1–19, discusses the use of such anthologies for roles beyond formal education, including composition and intellectual pleasure.

hard labor,¹³³ seemingly indicating similar views regarding its social status. Epictetus' knowledge, as shown in the *Discourses*, was at a very high technical level, the product of years studying the writings of figures like Chrysippus. His *Discourses* are lectures on applied ethics that he gave along with other technical lecturing on logic and physics in his classroom.¹³⁴ By way of comparison with Paul, although I've noted we should steer clear of accepting *Acts* as reliable historical evidence, its account of Paul studying formally at the feet of Gamaliel seems plausible, with Paul undertaking further knowledge-domain-specific education (Septuagint) with one or more teachers possessing that specialized knowledge. This built upon previous bureaucratic-familial education that provided a literary-educational foundation and was likely supplemented by ad hoc study from books, letters, handbooks, and instruction from other knowledge-specialists in various settings and time-horizons.

I consider Paul's and Epictetus' social locations, in other words, to be close, with a host of similarities: education (preliminary literary instruction and advanced knowledge-specific, more formal teaching); exposure to concepts widely dispersed in the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean (both philosophical-conceptual and literary-compositional); activity as literate specialists trafficking in abstract cosmological-religious assertions, group construction, and ethical instruction (what I referred to in chapter three as their metapragmatics);¹³⁵ social practices occurring in an educational, didactic

133 For Epictetus, see his comments in the *Discourses* 3.26.7; for Musonius Rufus, see his *Fragments* 11. As biblical scholars well know, this is also a huge subject within Pauline studies.

134 The account here reflects the general scholarly consensus, which in modern times stems particularly from the introduction of Schenkel, in Latin: H. Schenkel, ed., *Epicteti Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae* (Lipset: Teubner, 1894) esp. iii–iv. For wider cultural context, see R.A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), and Paul Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates: The Image of the Intellectual in Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), though Kaster places too strong an emphasis on the aristocratic, classicizing-rhetorical tradition that I've critiqued as not generally applicable for most people and types of education.

135 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 219f., extensively lays out the case that religion and texts were closely related. The primary and secondary evidence here is huge, but includes prophecy, temple inscriptions, and intellectuals producing religious documents. There is also a consensus that literacy per se entailed a certain level of authority, e.g., Woolf, "Literacy," 46 and K. Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000). For further discussion of text-production and literacy, see M. Beard, "Writing and Religion: Ancient Literacy and

setting,¹³⁶ and their enhanced status that reflects their specialized knowledge and authority regarding things like proper behavior and piety based on certain cosmological understandings. These authors' similar works also shared a meta-discourse (manifested in overlaps of form, content, and social purpose) and therefore related interdiscursively (directly or indirectly) with one another.

Paul's background, however, though similar to Epictetus', seems to have been a scaled down version. Instead of coming from one of the most influential households in the empire, Paul likely came from and/or worked in a relatively well-to-do or even regionally influential household that was ethnically Judean, Greek, mixed, and/or had extensive sympathies with Judean thought and practice. His domain-specific education (the Septuagint) also came from someone whose status was more limited (i.e., to Judeans and those sympathetic to their sacred writings) than Musonius Rufus, a widely-esteemed thinker, though possibly (much?) less so among those privileging the Septuagint.

Philodemus, somewhat by contrast, seems to have had a more advanced rhetorical education than Paul and Epictetus, a fact reflected in his more varied and prolific literary output, which included non-philosophical works such as poetry, as well as his aristocratic social standing. It is most likely that Philodemus' education was of an aristocratic, classicizing-rhetorical kind. This conclusion speaks to my point that highly educated authors modified their style based on the content and context of their writings, and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death* seem to reflect this fact. This fact also underlines my methodological points at the beginning of my study that we should speak of texts before authors, and that texts and text-types are the main drivers of delineating socio-literary spheres, though the social position of their authors also plays an important role.

Furthermore, many of Philodemus' works, including *On Piety* and *On Death*, contain a style lacking the trappings of advanced rhetorical theory, a style influenced, I think, by a (non-rhetorical) school setting, formal or semi-formal, with which he was doubtless well familiar, and which I argued just above well describes the social setting of Paul's and Epictetus' activity. Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*, for example, clearly show Philodemus' participation in debates with other philosophical systems over specific ethical issues, much as we find in Epictetus, and even to a certain extent Paul who

the Function of the Written Word in Roman Religion. Question: What Was the Role of Writing in Graeco-Roman Paganism?," *Hymphrey* (1991) 35–58.

136 Both R.D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 189, and Stowers, "Social Status" and elsewhere, argue that this is the best way to think of Paul's setting.

speaks to other religious claimants and their ethical claims. Philodemus also, after his substantial rhetorical training, received advanced and formal or semi-formal knowledge-domain-specific education, just as I outlined for Epictetus and Paul, only instead of Stoicism or the Septuagint, he studied Epicureanism. From what we know about Epicureanism, confirmed in Philodemus' internal evidence in *On Poetry* and *On Rhetoric*, it was a school of thought that was highly critical of aristocratic, classicizing education.

Philodemus, though probably trained in aristocratic, classicizing-rhetorical education and moving in elite social circles including figures like Horace and Virgil, nonetheless *chose* to write many of his works not reflecting that style but rather the less rhetorically-ornamented style common amongst other Epicureans and ethical philosophers more generally. Interestingly, his poetic writings and poetic theory, in *On Poetry* and *On Rhetoric*, further developed Epicurean thought to justify a certain kind of rhetoric and poetry such that he was praised for his contributions to aesthetics. This type of activity is a prime example of the kind of innovation and adaptation undertaken by a host of authors, such as Paul himself, within a given socio-literary sphere and within textual production more broadly.

Despite some differences, Philodemus does share with Paul and Epictetus certain significant similarities: a minimum level of education that included facility with certain rhetorical-conceptual conventions as well as familiarity with deploying different stylistic elements in their writings; activity as a literate specialist in the realm of abstract religious-cosmological knowledge and ethical instruction (i.e., metapragmatics); participation in a field of didacticism and intellectual contestation involving cosmology and ethics; and (presumably) enhanced status stemming from and regarding things like proper behavior, piety, and group formation.¹³⁷ As I concluded in chapter three, the texts of all three authors within a particular sphere also shared a particular sort of metadiscursivity, and they interdiscursively related to one another. Furthermore, their texts reflected and contributed to other, wider groupings of social practice, as their specific socio-literary sphere was part and parcel of textual production, ethical instruction, moral-paraenetic discourse, group formation, production of social capital, and forwarding

137 Some other scholars have also sought parallels based on these broader conceptual levels, e.g., C.E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus. Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (Leiden; New York; Koln: Brill, 1995), and J.T. Fitzgerald, D. Obbink, and G.S. Holland, eds., *Philodemus and the New Testament World* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004).

cosmological-religious claims more broadly in the larger Greco-Roman, ancient Mediterranean context.¹³⁸

The subject of religion is a site of both convergences and departures between these three thinkers and their texts. All three authors to a certain extent assume the existence of god(s), though their particular religious-cosmological beliefs result in very different attitudes toward these gods. Paul, for example, vouches for religious practices directed toward a god and Christ-figure who are interested parties in human activity. Philodemus, by contrast, doesn't see any of the gods as interested parties, while Epictetus sees indirect divine involvement in all things. Yet despite beliefs in different gods and the differing attitudes of these gods, all three authors believe in the fundamental intersection between virtue and the gods, a belief that manifests in certain ethical exhortations relating to desires, fears, emotion, and group construction. Properly virtuous action (i.e., ethics) is closely related to piety for all three authors, a relation that appeared again and again in my analyses in chapter four. All three authors argue that proper action, in other words virtuous action, came from imitation of divine example. This divine example embodied virtue and was also reflected in the authors themselves, who wedded their specialized knowledge to proper action, holding themselves up as ethical exemplars¹³⁹ who personified the intersection of specialized, religious-cosmological knowledge and proper ethics.

Paul's claims to authority related to a specific ethnic-religious tradition. Though this may seem different from Philodemus' and Epictetus' claims to authority, they also claim specific knowledge and allegiance with particular

138 Note parallels here with Thom's remarks on widely available popular philosophical texts around Paul's time such as Cleanthes' "Hymn to Zeus," the Pythagorean "Golden Verses," or the Pseudo-Aristotelian "On the Cosmos": "these texts come from a greater variety of philosophical traditions than just Cynicism or Stoicism; they also represent a broad spectrum of genres . . . Although most of them have an ethical aim, this is not true of all: Pseudo-Aristotle's *On the Cosmos* discusses geography and meteorology as background for his main interest, namely cosmotheology; he also refers to ethics in a very indirect manner. Plutarch's dialogue *On the Face in the Moon*, again combines scientific knowledge with myth containing souls and *daimones*," 53, in "Paul and Popular Philosophy", and also 55. Thom's comments well reflect my points about commonly available tropes and ideas outside of advanced, formal education and the blending of traditional genre categories possible in a given socio-literary sphere.

139 Exemplarity, or using previous *exempla* to measure and help achieve moral progress, was a well-worn phenomenon in the ancient Mediterranean. For a recent discussion with respect to one of Paul's letters that usefully summarizes some of the ancient data and understandings, see P.-B. Smith, *Paradigms of Being in Christ: A Study of the Epistle to the Philippians* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2013) 16–29, 107–160.

specialized domains of knowledge that also relate to gods, the universe, and ethics. Paul's pride of place given authoritative texts (Septuagint) and figures (Christ) find some structural parallel in the authority given by Philodemus and Epictetus to their own authoritative texts (the writings of Epicurus and Chrysippus, respectively) and figures (Epicurus and Chrysippus, respectively, and both lay explicit claim to Socrates).¹⁴⁰ The references to Socrates and earlier philosophical writings also may provide a parallel to Paul's ethnic-religious affiliation through Philodemus' and Epictetus' allegiance to some type of imagined "Greekness", an intellectual and cultural construction that saw a revival in the Second Sophistic through the Byzantine era and beyond.

All three authors, despite their different ethnic affiliations and religious beliefs, also vouched for certain similar types of social activity derived from these beliefs, such as group construction and aligning behavior with piety-cum-virtue. All vouched for behavior that departed from typical, civic cult, a fitting structural parallel given the shared departure from traditional socio-religious affiliations and activity by Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Paul's Christ-belief. Paul's proscription against idol worship, in other words, is little different from Philodemus and Epictetus telling their audience that they have the wrong beliefs, values, and social practices, which stemmed from popular civic religion. We thus see that while specific elements of content can change within a given sphere, the overall *types* of content—a framework of religious claims containing generalized ethical prescriptions toward piety and virtue, for example—remain similar, as do literary style and broader social purpose. Again, the specific elements of this social purpose might differ, but broadly speaking all three authors want to defend their cosmological framework and personal authority vis-à-vis their audience, and construct groupness around an abstract, ethical, exhortative program derived from their cosmological framework.

A Few Final Structural, Textual, and Abstract Considerations

Intriguingly, Morello and Morrison specifically identify group formation ("build a sense of community"), claiming authority ("demonstrate [one's] social influence", "advertises and negotiates social status"), and ethical advice (giving

140 D. Sedley, "Philosophical Allegiance in the Greco-Roman World," in *Philosophia Togata: Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society* (ed. M.T. Griffin and J. Barnes; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 97–119.

“commands or instructions”) as three things letters do especially well.¹⁴¹ They also specifically identify Epicurean correspondences (we might also think of Philodemus’ and Epictetus’ works identified here as types of open-ended correspondence, as they seem to be in dialogue with their audience as well as other philosophical schools, or perhaps some combination of correspondence and lecture) and Seneca’s epistles (which fit fairly well in my sphere, despite the different language) as exemplars of these specific types of agendas.¹⁴² I again emphasize that my particular socio-literary sphere can be extended to include works in other languages that shared the same ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman context. Indeed, many highly educated Latin authors were well versed in Greek thought, language, and literature, and shared the same small world of text-producing literate specialists.¹⁴³

The “ongoing”, “didactic”, and “open-ended” nature of letters that Morello and Morrison highlight also finds natural parallels in Epictetus’ *Discourses*’ apparent classroom setting, Philodemus’ apparent participation in inter-school debates, and possibly Paul’s own social activity.¹⁴⁴ From this perspective, letters and lectures closely overlap in some of their basic structural-conceptual

141 Morello and Morrison, *Ancient Letters*, vii–x. See also discussion of group construction and authority in L. Alexander, “Paul and the Hellenistic Schools: The Evidence of Galen,” in *Paul in his Hellenistic Context*, and S.K. Stowers, “Social Status, Public Speaking and Private Teaching: The Circumstances of Paul’s Preaching Activity,” *NovT* 26.1 (1984) 59–79.

142 See further specific discussion of Epicurean and Senecan letters in B. Inwood, “The Importance of Form in Seneca’s Philosophical Letters,” in *Ancient Letters*, 133f. For further overview, discussion, and bibliography, see B. Inwood, *Seneca: Selected Philosophical Letters* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) esp. xii–xxi; Inwood, *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); M. Graver, “Therapeutic Reading and Seneca’s Moral Epistles” (Ph. D. Dissertation: Brown University, 1996). There is much potential in Inwood’s descriptions of Seneca’s form and content that seem to map well onto the points I am making here, lending further credence to an extension of a particular socio-literary sphere to include works in other languages that shared the same ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman socio-literary context. We should recall that many highly educated Latin authors were well versed in Greek thought, language, and literature, and shared the same small world of text-producing literate specialists.

143 Horace, Virgil, and Cicero are all prime examples of what we would describe as “Latin authors” who were highly versed in Greek language and literature and who moved in social circles that included what we think of as “Greek philosophers” such as Philodemus and possibly also Epictetus.

144 The nature of Paul’s contextual practice has in fact been likened to a philosophical school, e.g., Alexander, “Paul and the Hellenistic School,” 62, who draws from Stowers, “Social Status.” In the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean, philosophical schools and individual philosophical activity was often ongoing, didactic, and open-ended, as philosophers

underpinnings and abstract constructions.¹⁴⁵ Works from other spheres, such as a treatise on bridge-building (technical-scientific sphere) or an extended, classicizing oration to a group of citizens (advanced-rhetorical classicizing sphere)¹⁴⁶ usually do not have the same open-ended, ongoing quality with respect to their audience, a quality of discourse that I think is central to this particular sphere containing Paul's letters.¹⁴⁷

The existence of certain types of social practices (here, particular open-ended modes of discourse regarding groups, authority, and behavior) tied to particular socio-literary spheres is reflective of a concept of a cultural-intellectual field, from Bourdieu among others,¹⁴⁸ that for this sphere entails intellectual

stressed the continuous investment in improving oneself and others, as well as the pedagogical and dialogic aspect of that interaction.

- 145 Stowers' *Diatribes* concluded that the style of the diatribe, such as we find in Epictetus, much more closely fits a school setting rather than a public speaking context, and further argues that Paul's letters project a similar 'school of Paul' type ethos. There are many exceptions here, such as letters written in verse for enjoyment or pertaining to technical-scientific thought. The former was common in literary circles; for an example of the latter see D.R. Langslow, "The *Epistula* in Ancient Scientific and Technical Literature, with Special Reference to Medicine," in *Ancient Letters*, 211–224; see further introduction and discussion of the use of poetry in what we would term scientific literature in A. Doody, S. Föllinger, and L. Taub, "Structures and Strategies in Ancient Greek and Roman Technical Writing: An Introduction," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 43 (2012) 233–236.
- 146 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 44, describes the role of advanced rhetorical literature to aid one focused on a career in the public sphere versus people like Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus who seem to have eschewed the political *cursus* in favor of other group affiliations and their authority and status therein. The reader may recall that I argued in this chapter for the close relationship between types of status and domain-specific knowledge.
- 147 But note S. Föllinger, "Dialogische Elemente in der antiken Fachliteratur," in *Antike Fachtexte. Ancient Technical Texts* (ed. T. Fögen; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005) 221–234. We thus see that elements of poetry and dialogism can both unexpectedly appear in other types of literature, a fact that reminds us that within our generalizations, and within any mode of discourse, there will always be exceptions and that ancient texts were sites of innovation, hybridity, exaptation, and boundary-crossing, much as they still are today.
- 148 See discussion in S.K. Stowers, "Mythmaking, Social Formation, and Varieties of Social Theory," in *Redescribing Christian Origins* (ed. R. Cameron and M.P. Miller; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004) 489–496, esp. 491, where Stowers discusses certain social theorists (specifically later Foucault, Bourdieu, Freyfus, Laclau and Mouffe, and Schatzki) whose theorization weds insights from individualist and structuralist perspectives to allow individual innovation within given frameworks constituting, and constituted by, social practices, physical environment, and social formations. The reader may recall I defined socio-literary spheres in chapter one using the language of modes of discourse and enablements and

contestation and socio-epistemological position-takings with others in view.¹⁴⁹ This is generally foreign to, for example, the scientific-technical sphere or the papyri letters, and is a prominent feature in Paul's letters, Epictetus' *Discourses*, and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*, all of which reference other literate specialists and competing versions of ethics, cosmological assertions, and group construction. Figured in terms of their goals and socio-textual practices (context, production, and so forth), in other words, the social locations of Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus vis-à-vis their audience are notably similar.

constraints regarding social actions (of which text production is a type), specifically with reference to the work of Bourdieu, Foucault, Schatzki, and Stowers.

- 149 Some scholars have intriguingly argued for similarities in position-takings, open-ended teaching, and group construction (my terminology) between philosophical schools and later rabbis and related social formations: C. Hezser, "Interfaces between Rabbinic Literature and Graeco-Roman Philosophy," in *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture* (ed. P. Schäfer and C. Hezser; 3 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 1:161–187; J. Bergman, "Die stoische Philosophie und die jüdische Frömmigkeit," *Judaica* (1912) 145–166; H.G. Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (London: Routledge, 2000); H. Lapin, "Jewish and Christian Academies in Roman Palestine: Some Preliminary Observations," in *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (ed. A. Raban and K.G. Holum; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 496–512; H.A. Fischel, ed., *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature* (New York: KTAV, 1977); Fischel, *Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy: A Study in Epicurea and Rhetorica in Early Midrashic Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); A. Wasserstein, "Greek Language and Philosophy in Early Rabbinic Academies," in *Jewish Education and Learning* (ed. G. Abramson and T. Parfitt; Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994) 221–231. See discussion in Pitts, "Hellenistic Schools," 36f. for summary and additional references.

Conclusion: Socio-Literary Spheres and Literary Classification in Biblical and Classical Studies

Review of Conclusions

I began this project dissatisfied with previous attempts to answer two main questions: 1) What kind of author is Paul?, and 2) What kind of writings are his letters? These questions have been, and remain, sites of wide dispute. I attempted to answer these questions by arguing for the relevance of a fresh perspective that describes and compares Paul's letters on the basis of a set of specific, stylistic-literary criteria. By defining and applying a set of specific literary characteristics, I was able to both describe and compare texts in an empirical, transparent way. The use of polythetic criteria to describe and compare texts found justification in the field of literary studies, where certain work on genre argues for a flexible, complex classificatory system for literary analysis.

The application of my criteria to Paul's letters and a host of contemporary, ancient Mediterranean, Greek and Latin texts demonstrated that the texts closest to Paul's letters were Epictetus' *Discourses*, Philodemus' *On Death* and *On Piety*, Seneca's *Natural Questions*, Pliny the Younger's Letters, the *Letter to the Hebrews*, and *4 Maccabees*. I analyzed Paul's letters along with Epictetus' and Philodemus' texts in detail, showing a substantial amount and variety of overlaps in the presence of my literary characteristics. The comparison between texts and/or social positions is a complex one, and differences are to be expected, and did arise, even among similar texts and authors. Yet I was still able to make positive conclusions based on the significance of the similarities relative to the smallness of the differences, and the relative similarities/differences of the texts and authors within a sphere relative to the similarities/differences with respect to the texts and authors outside this sphere.

My textual analysis has shown that the former type of comparison (similarities relative to differences) bears significant fruit for our analysis of Paul's letters alongside texts such as Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death*. My treatment of control documents (Aelius Aristides' *Panathenaicus*; the *Damascus Document*) has shown that the latter type of comparison (size of similarities/differences between texts within a sphere compared to size of similarities/differences relative to texts outside the sphere) adds significance to the former comparison's conclusions as well as corrects other scholarship

that gives texts such as my control documents pride of place for classifying Paul's letters and understanding their style.

With this improved description and comparison in hand, I provided explanation for the demonstrated textual overlaps, arguing that Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus (along with other authors with similar texts) had significant similarities in their texts' content and social purpose (i.e., a shared metadiscursivity), and that the authors also had significant similarities in their social locations and social practices (i.e., a shared metapragmatics). These overlaps between texts and authors led me to conclude that these texts and authors partly comprised a particular socio-literary sphere. I defined a socio-literary sphere as a grouping of texts that share significant elements of style, content, and social purpose, and whose authors share certain elements of social location including a minimum level of education. Authors and texts within a sphere intersect interdiscursively, and this sphere was but one of many spheres in a wider socio-literary taxonomy that comprise the overall sphere of text production in the ancient Mediterranean.

I also discussed the implications of my textual comparison and theorizing about form, content, and social purpose for historical reconstructions about Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus, whose lives all lack substantial historical evidence. I specifically argued that these authors' textual contents and social purposes had certain differences that reflected their different biographies and different routes they took in, for example, attaining their education. These differences, in turn, can explain both similarities in style as well as differences in content. Philodemus, for instance, likely had an aristocratic, advanced-rhetorical education, but his Epicurean education and sympathies, combined with his choice of ethical-philosophical content, resulted in a style close to that of Paul and Epictetus that eschewed substantial, advanced-rhetorical adornment.¹ Epictetus, meanwhile, likely had some sort of informal, bureaucratic and philosophical, knowledge-specific education that, combined with his particular subject matter and social purpose, resulted in the similarities of his *Discourses* with Paul's letters and certain of Philodemus' texts. Lastly, Paul likely also had a bureaucratic-familial basic education and advanced knowledge-specific education (Septuagint) that combined with his subject matter to produce the particular style found in his letters.

My conclusion here is not that there necessarily existed direct correlations between status, education, and types of writing. Rather, things like status, education, and writing are hugely complex categories containing substantial variance

1 But note his innovation in *On Rhetoric* and *On Poetics* with regard to literary aesthetics, previously discussed.

among their constituent parts. Certain of these parts closely correlate—as one needed a minimum of education to write certain types of literature, for example—but I've argued that we should focus more on grouping types of texts than types of authors. Authors with substantial educations could and did write different types of texts with different styles, and a given author's education likely changed throughout their life through further reading, study, and discussion. Nonetheless, we can still usefully generalize about certain authors, seeing that certain social practices, textual purposes, and textual styles closely intersect and mutually influence one another. These elements in turn have some relation to social status indicators, such as wealth, social mobility, and ethnicity, but as a comparison of the lives of Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus has shown, we do not find uniform or direct causality, an unsurprising conclusion given the tremendous complexities and variations inherent in society and social practice.

Drawing on work from literary theory, media studies, literary sociology, and linguistic anthropology, I showed how the fundamental intersections of a text's or text-type's form, content, social purpose, and the social location of its author were complex, shifting, and ongoing sites of mutual influence. I suggested that Paul wrote as he did due to his general adherence to implicit, shared conventions pertaining to these intersections, and that Paul's language indexed himself within his wider social context as one seeking to explain and defend abstract claims, influence his audience's behavior, construct groupness based on newly-demarcated categories and knowledge, and gain authority over these groups and any wider audience on the basis of both his specific knowledge and personal, ethical exemplarity. I concluded that my analysis of form, content, and social purpose suggested things about Paul's education and wider social location, namely that he seemed to possess a limited, bureaucratic-familial education in a household with Judaeian affiliation or sympathies that was supplemented by further specific study of the Septuagint and other subjects such as rhetoric and philosophy widely available in handbooks and/or social interactions, and that he and his texts inhabited the same, general socio-literary sphere as certain contemporary, Greco-Roman, ethical-philosophical thinkers such as, but not limited to, Epictetus and Philodemus.

Speaking more widely, we can identify a particular type of ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman thinker and text-producer with particular concerns, goals, and social practices: group construction; appealing to a wide audience; forwarding and explicating abstract, generalized claims about humanity, the gods, and the cosmos; gaining social authority (i.e., status) on the basis of specialized knowledge-claims and individual, ethical exemplarity; and staking out a space in an ongoing, open-ended, dialogic, competitive,

socio-literary-intellectual atmosphere of rival claims and claimants opposed on the same above issues. These authors penned particular kinds of texts with shared features, came from different walks of life despite significant similarities, and were an identifiable sub-set of society and the literary landscape more broadly.

Further Thoughts and Future Study

This study has touched on a variety of subjects relevant not only to Pauline studies but biblical studies and ancient literary studies more broadly. In particular, I have argued that we should understand Paul apart from essentialized cultural and/or ethnic categories, that we should re-think formal understandings of education and status, and that we should seek to classify, compare, and thereby understand Paul's letters alongside other types of contemporary literature according to transparent, polythetic criteria. These conclusions all stem from one central argument, namely that we are best served by thinking in terms of *pan-Mediterranean* literary, social, and cultural phenomena, and that we should avoid strict demarcations along any essentialized lines.

In thinking about the payoff for this type of work in biblical studies, the application of my literary criteria to other texts of this period immediately comes to mind, such as the deutero-Pauline literature and perhaps early Rabbinic literature. If textual and social phenomena seem to have cut across given cultural-ethnic categories (and even languages, e.g. Seneca's *Natural Questions*) around the first century ancient Mediterranean, the question is whether, and if so to what extent, this continues in later periods, such as through late antiquity. Do we find, for example, that so-called Christian and Jewish literature forged an explicit difference in their literary outputs? In terms of the intersection of form and content, were they, and if so to what extent, really "ways that never parted"?² If they truly did never part, then what is the argument for retaining these categories (Jewish vs. Christian) as primary designations for individuals, communities, types of practice, and kinds of literature? Do we find a separation between later works that had similar purposes and contents, but different languages, religions, and/or ethnic affiliations? And how do other, later attempts at forwarding claims, constructing groups, and positing authorial exemplarity compare to what we find in Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus, such as we see in later neo-Platonic material in Proclus, Iamblichus, Porphyry,

2 A.H. Becker and A.Y. Reed, eds. *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

and Plotinus? Despite apparent differences in the specifics of their content, in other words, might we still see substantial structural overlaps in how people and their texts attempted to form groups in tandem with their abstract claims?

I've argued that we should seek parallels in social and literary practice across a variety of types of groups with ostensibly different content, drawing from insightful scholarship treating examples such as *collegia*, philosophical schools, and Rabbinic group formation. It remains to be seen, however, if such examples fully bear out in the intersection of form, content, and social purpose. I suspect they will. In the meantime, I suggest we think of Paul not as a Christian with a Jewish past and world-view paired with a Greek education, but rather (along with Epictetus and Philodemus) as a domain-specific educated, entrepreneurial, and open-minded ancient Mediterranean figure, whose life cannot be broken down into pre- and post-conversion stages, but who remained dynamic and evolving by constantly learning from, and deploying, a variety of sources and strategies in a complex, shifting, and challenging environment.

Appendix

The first several graphs lay out each of my literary characteristics and show their total incidences in each text and the percentage at which each characteristic occurs relative to all the other characteristics in the given text. Later spreadsheets detail individual texts.

Comparing the relative incidences of each literary characteristic reveals a text's "shape." When texts are graphed according to their literary criteria, this shape becomes visually evident and can be compared with other texts by overlaying their graphical data.

Using Paul's letters as a trend line (though n.b. the variation within Paul's corpus), one can see how texts within this socio-literary sphere map relatively closely to Paul's letters, while other texts outside this sphere do not. Thus in the first few graphs below, Epictetus' *Discourses* and Philodemus' *On Piety* and *On Death* are mapped relative to Paul's letters. The criteria on the x-axis are listed, from left to right, in order of their relative incidence (y-axis) in the Pauline corpus, high to low. Thus texts that closely match Paul's corpus will similarly trend from higher on the left side of the x-axis to lower on the right side of the x-axis. Texts that are a poor match for Paul's corpus will not match this trend and be more evenly or randomly dispersed across the x-axis.

Closer looks reveal substantial but expected amounts of statistical noise. Particular points of departure by texts of a shared socio-literary sphere—such as the spikes on systematic argument and groupness in Philodemus' *On Piety* & *On Death*, or the nadir on universal claims/assertions in Epictetus' *Discourses*—reveal traits unique to each text and/or author that reflect authorial innovation, personal style, and the fact that socio-literary spheres are generally descriptive and not specifically prescriptive such as we find in formal genre.

Graphical Analysis: Paul's Letters and Comparanda

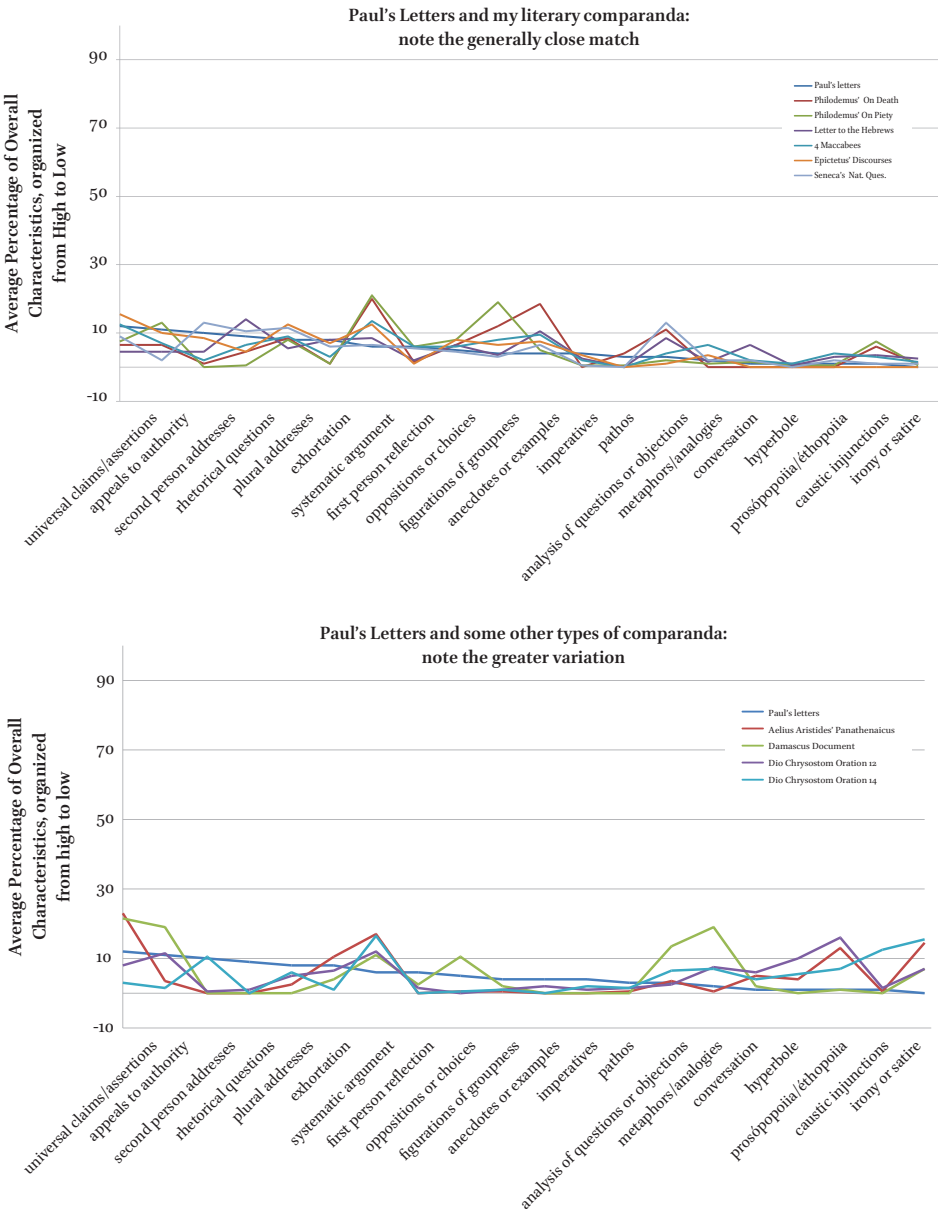


FIGURE 1.1

Paul's Letters and my literary comparanda:
note the generally close match

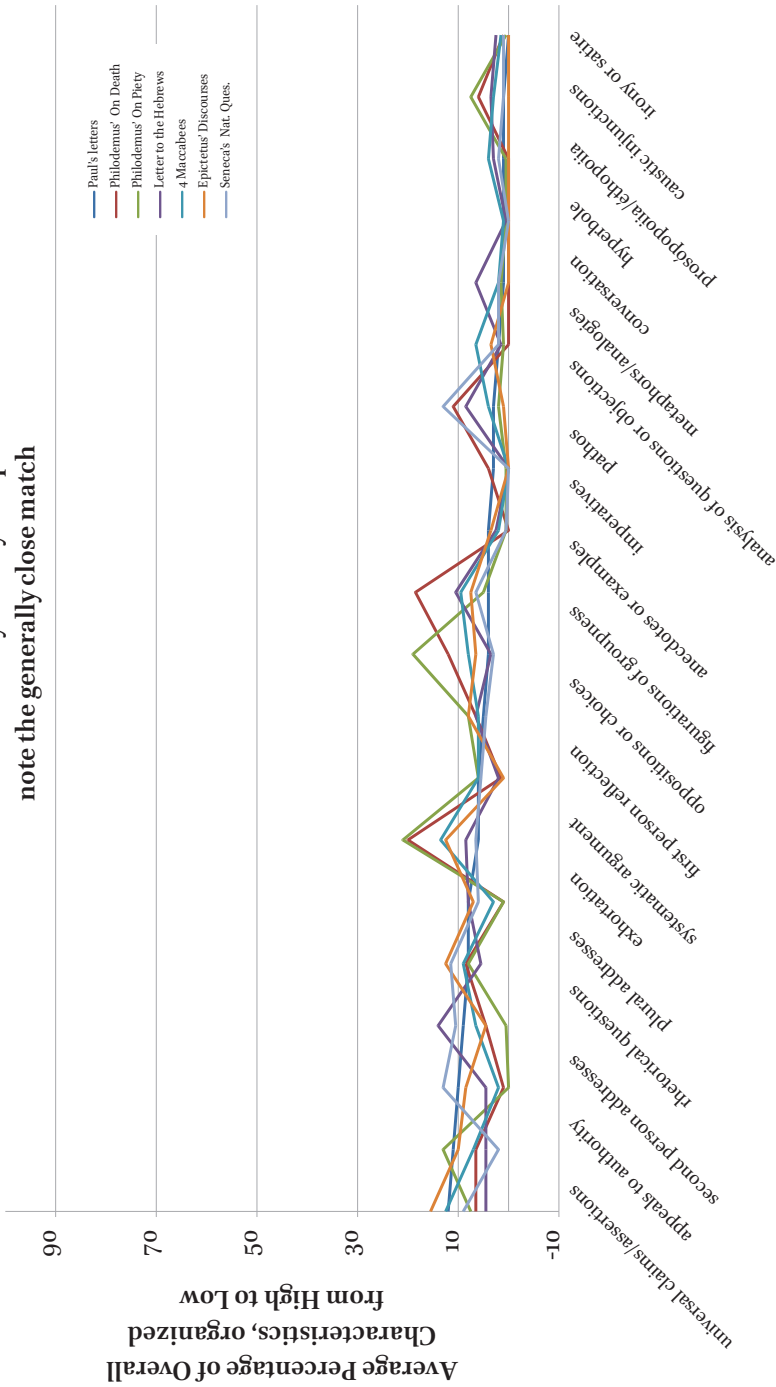


FIGURE 1.2

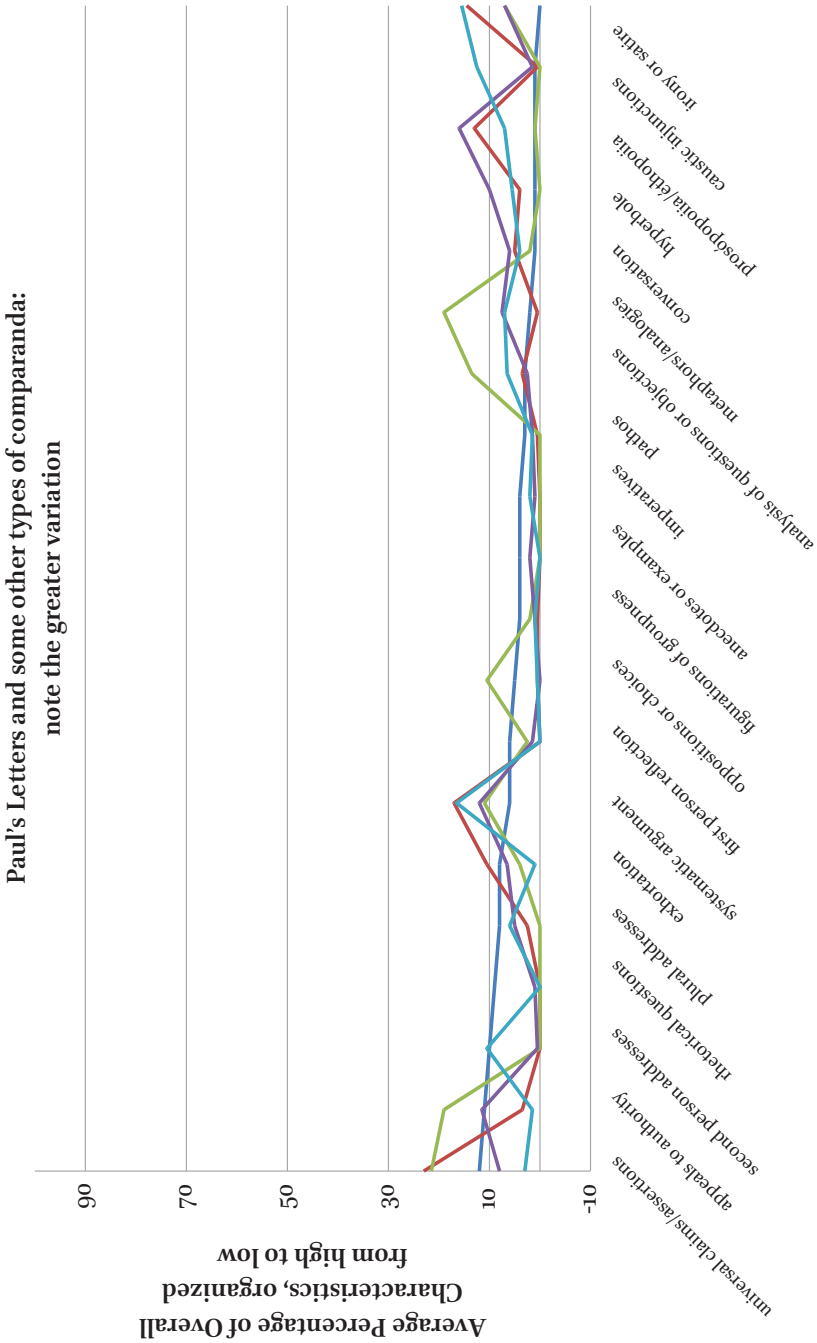
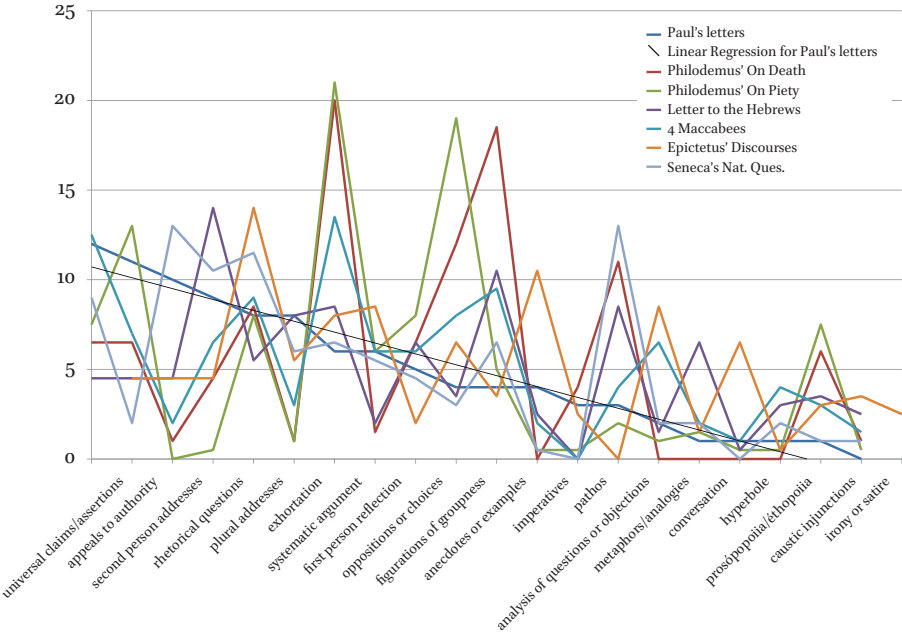


FIGURE 1.3

Paul's Letters (with trend-line) and Comparanda - a closer look:
note the variation around any one characteristic despite the general overlaps,
a fact expected within a complex social data set



Paul's Letters (with trend-line) and some other types of
comparanda - a closer look: note the much greater variation,
especially on the left and right ends of the x-axis

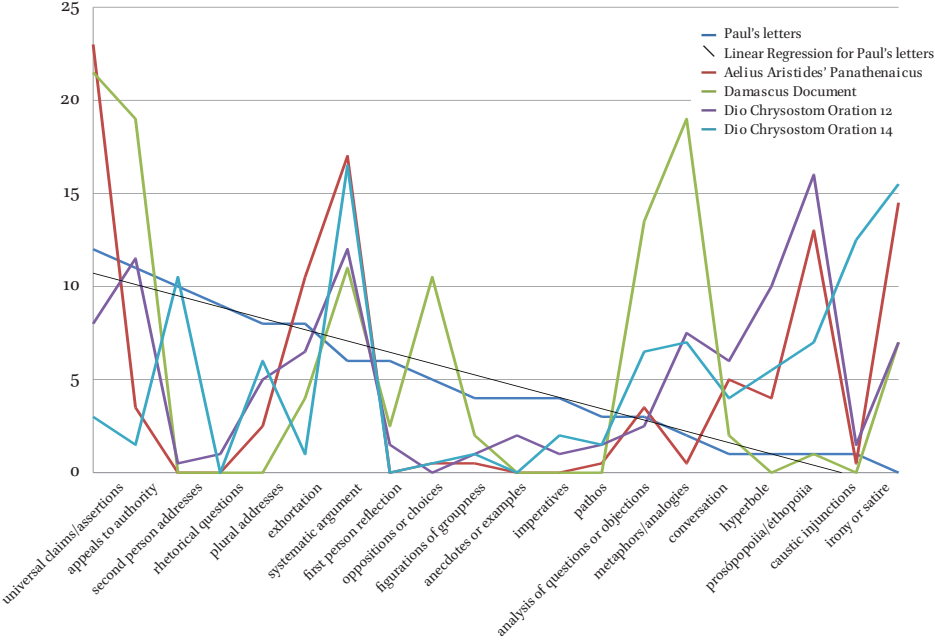


FIGURE 1.4

Paul's Letters (with trend-line) and Comparanda - a closer look:
note the variation around any one characteristic despite the general overlaps,
a fact expected within a complex social data set

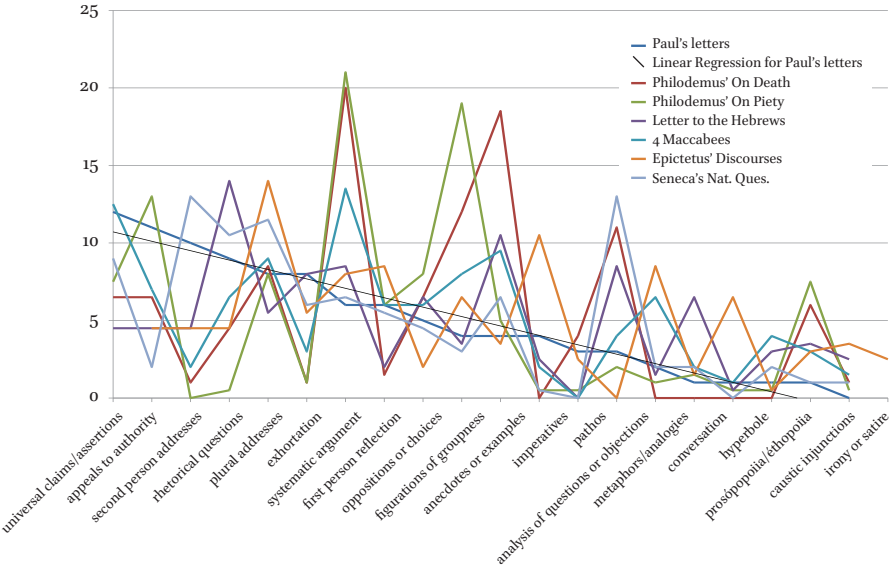


FIGURE 1.5

Paul's Letters (with trend-line) and some other types of comparanda - a closer look: note the much greater variation, especially on the left and right ends of the x-axis

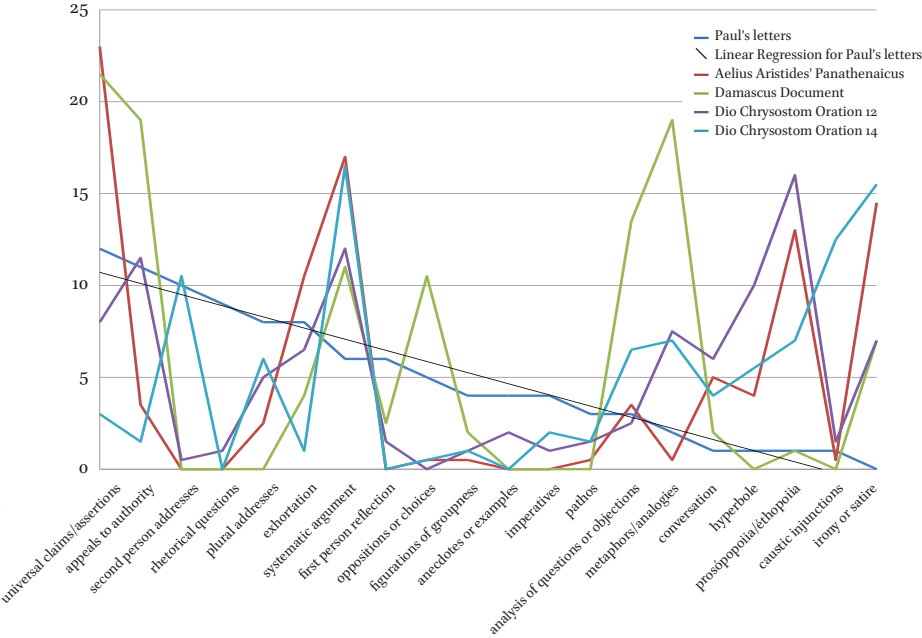


FIGURE 1.6

Paul's Letters and my comparanda:
note the more consistent clustering compared with graph on next page

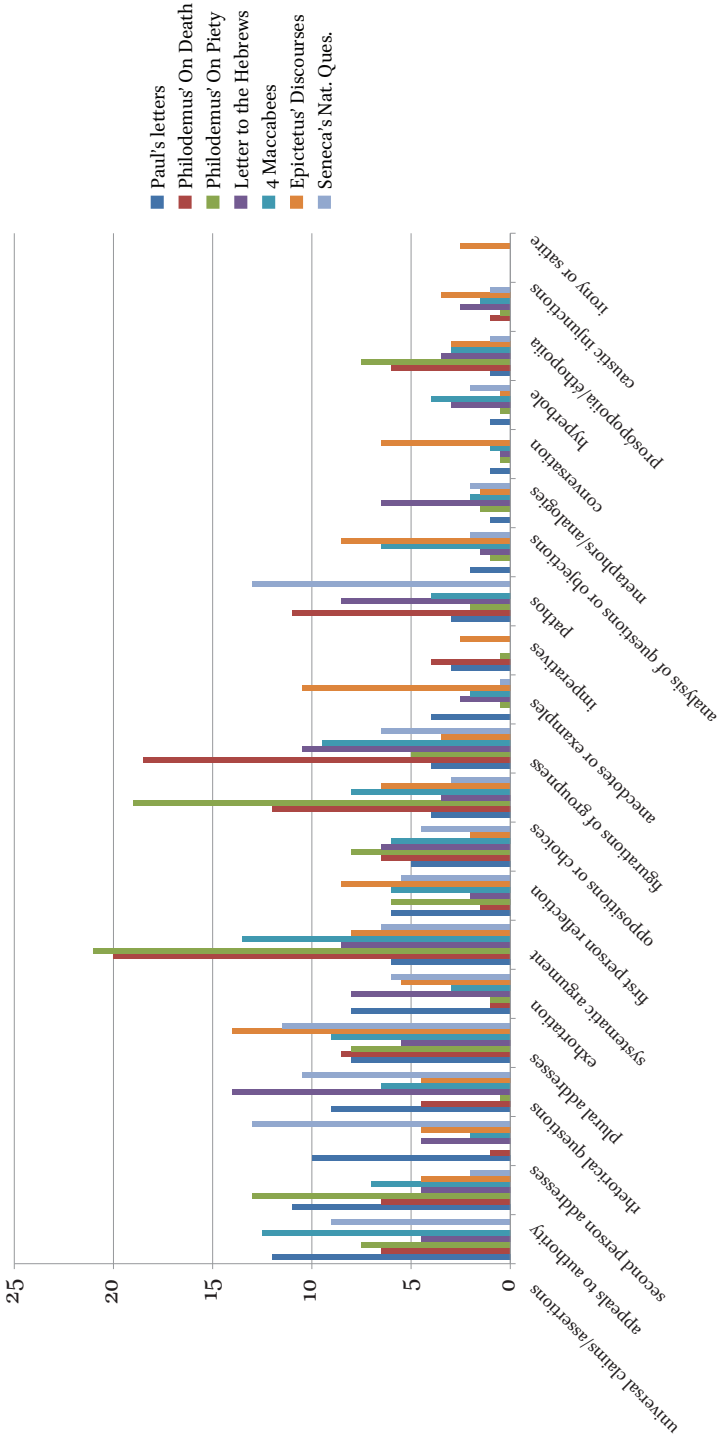


FIGURE 1.7

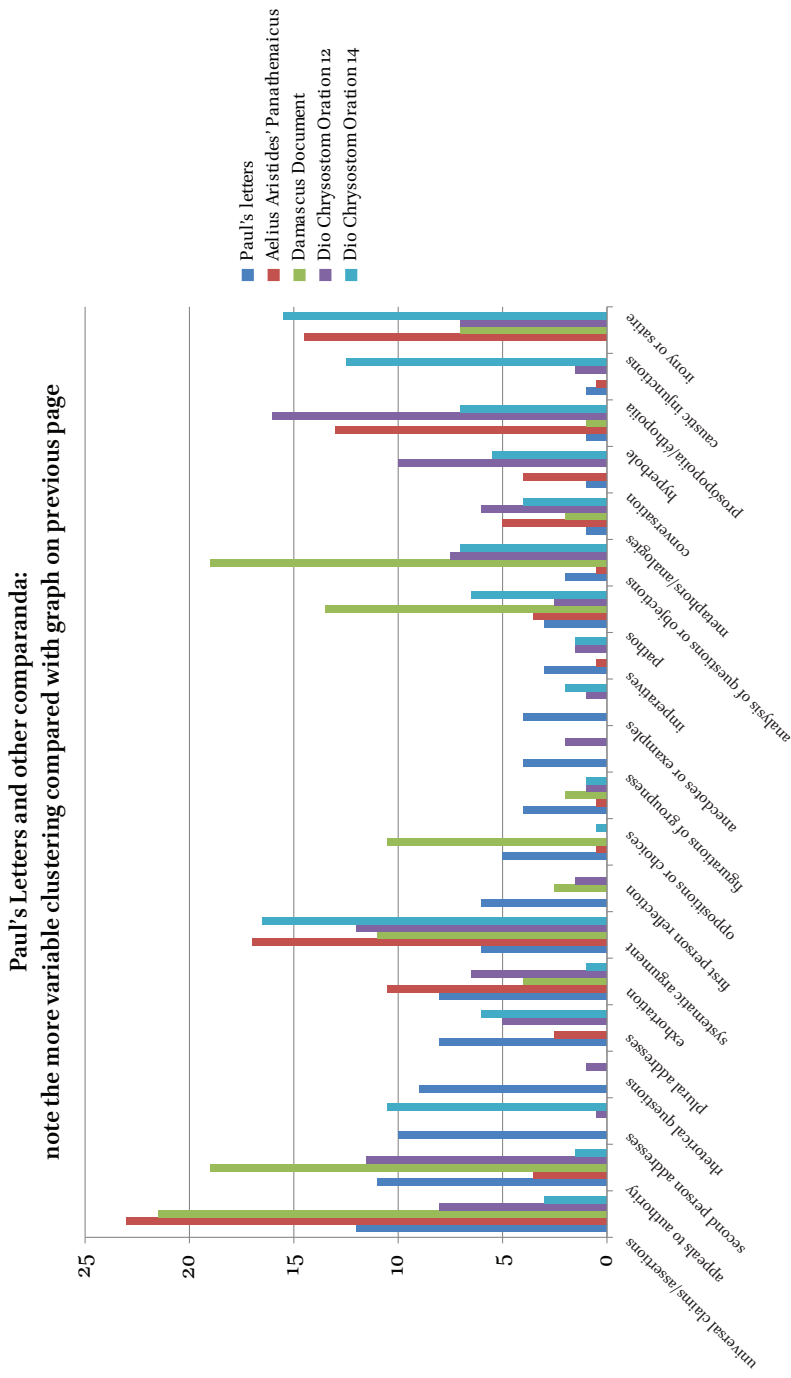


FIGURE 1.8

Distilled Data: Literary Sphere and Other Comparanda

Data: Paul's Letters & my comparanda

Characteristic (w/average %)	Paul's letters	Philodemus' On Death	Philodemus' On Piety	Epictetus' Discourses	4 Maccabees	Letter to the Hebrews	Seneca's Nat. Ques.
universal claims/ assertions	12	6.5	7.5	4.5	12.5	15.5	9
appeals to authority	11	6.5	13	4.5	7	10	2
second person addresses	10	1	0	4.5	2	8.5	13
rhetorical questions	9	4.5	0.5	14	6.5	4.5	10.5
plural addresses	8	8.5	8	5.5	9	12.5	11.5
exhortation	8	1	1	8	3	7	6
systematic argument	6	20	21	8.5	13.5	12.5	6.5
first person reflection	6	1.5	6	2	6	1	5.5
oppositions or choices	5	6.5	8	6.5	6	8	4.5
figurations of groupness	4	12	19	3.5	8	6.5	3
anecdotes or examples	4	18.5	5	10.5	9.5	7.5	6.5
imperatives	4	0	0.5	2.5	2	3.5	0.5
pathos	3	4	0.5	0	0	0	0
analysis of questions/ objections	3	11	2	8.5	4	1	13
metaphors/analogies	2	0	1	1.5	6.5	3.5	2
conversation	1	0	1.5	6.5	2	0	2
hyperbole	1	0	0.5	0.5	1	0	0
prosópopoiia/éthopoiia	1	0	0.5	3	4	0	2
caustic injunctions	1	6	7.5	3.5	3	0	1
irony or satire	0	1	0.5	2.5	1.5	0	1

FIGURE 2.1

Data: Paul's Letters and other comapranda

Characteristic (w/average %)	Paul's letters	Aelius Aristides' Panathenaicus	Damascus Document	Dio Chrysostom Oration 12	Dio Chrysostom Oration 14
universal claims/ assertions	12	23	21.5	8	3
appeals to authority	11	3.5	19	11.5	1.5
second person addresses	10	0	0	0.5	10.5
rhetorical questions	9	0	0	1	0
plural addresses	8	2.5	0	5	6
exhortation	8	10.5	4	6.5	1
systematic argument	6	17	11	12	16.5
first person reflection	6	0	2.5	1.5	0
oppositions or choices	5	0.5	10.5	0	0.5
figurations of groupness	4	0.5	2	1	1
anecdotes or examples	4	0	0	2	0
imperatives	4	0	0	1	2
pathos	3	0.5	0	1.5	1.5
analysis of questions/ objections	3	3.5	13.5	2.5	6.5
metaphors/analogies	2	0.5	19	7.5	7
conversation	1	5	2	6	4
hyperbole	1	4	0	10	5.5
prosópopoiia/éthopoiia	1	13	1	16	7
caustic injunctions	1	0.5	0	1.5	12.5
irony or satire	0	14.5	7	7	15.5

FIGURE 2.2

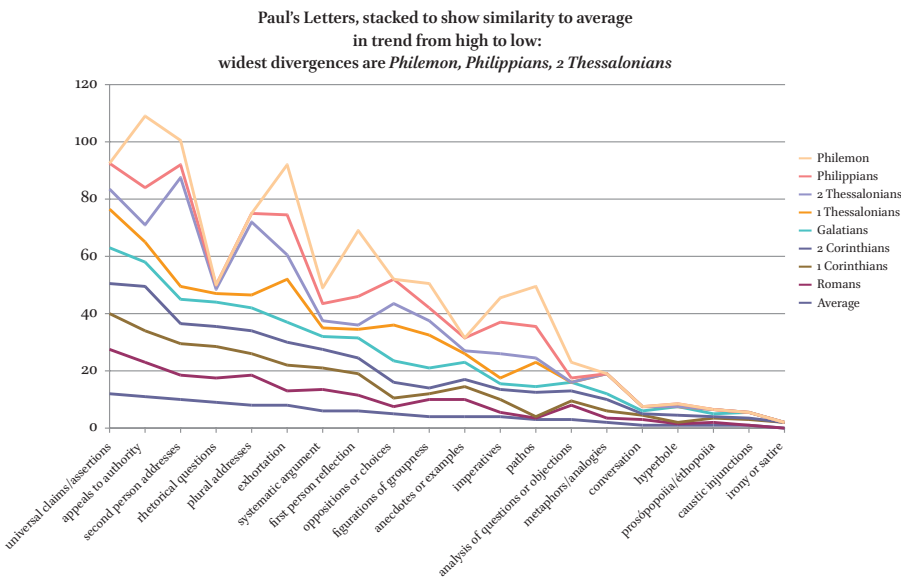
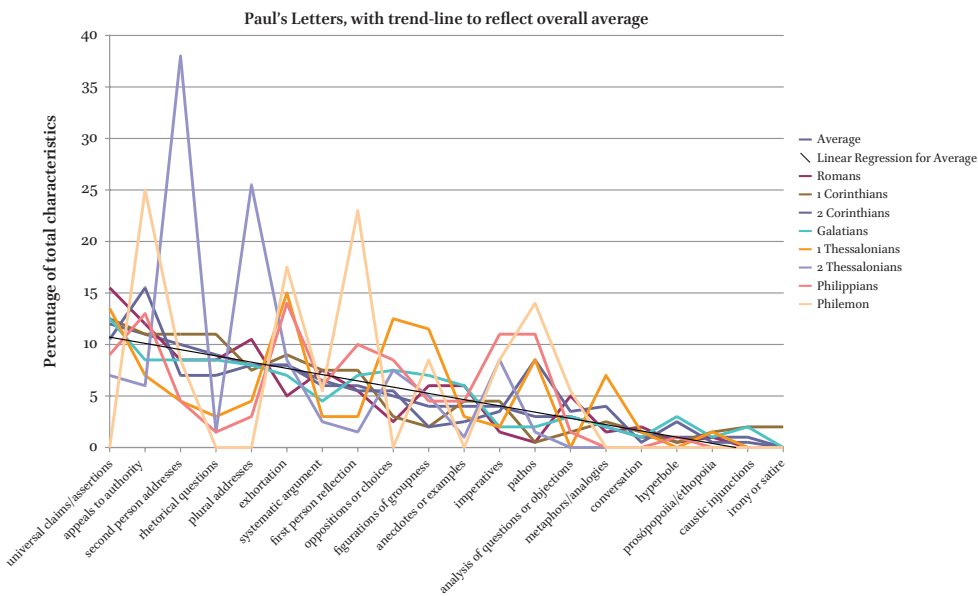


FIGURE 3.1

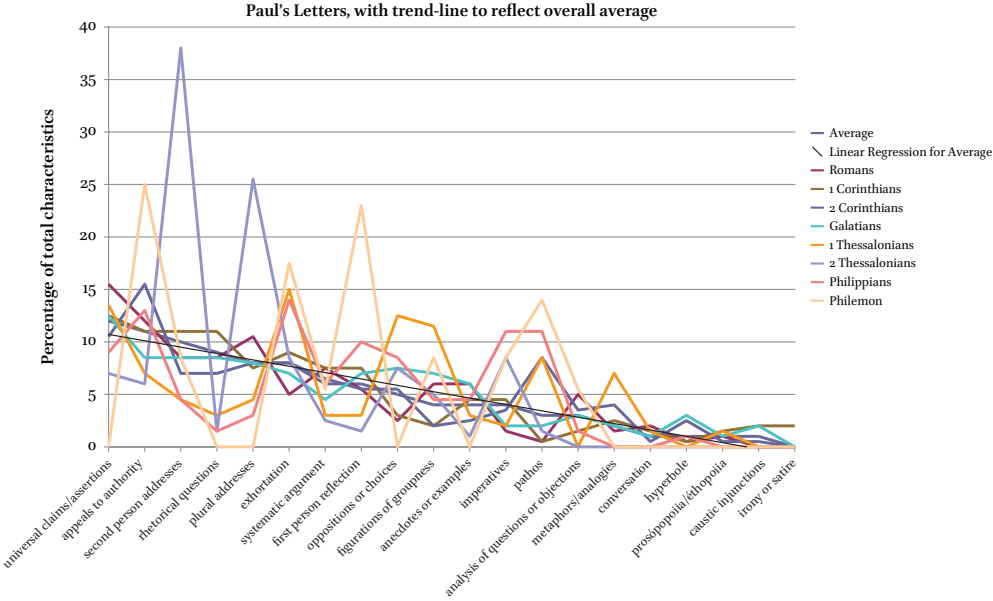


FIGURE 3.2

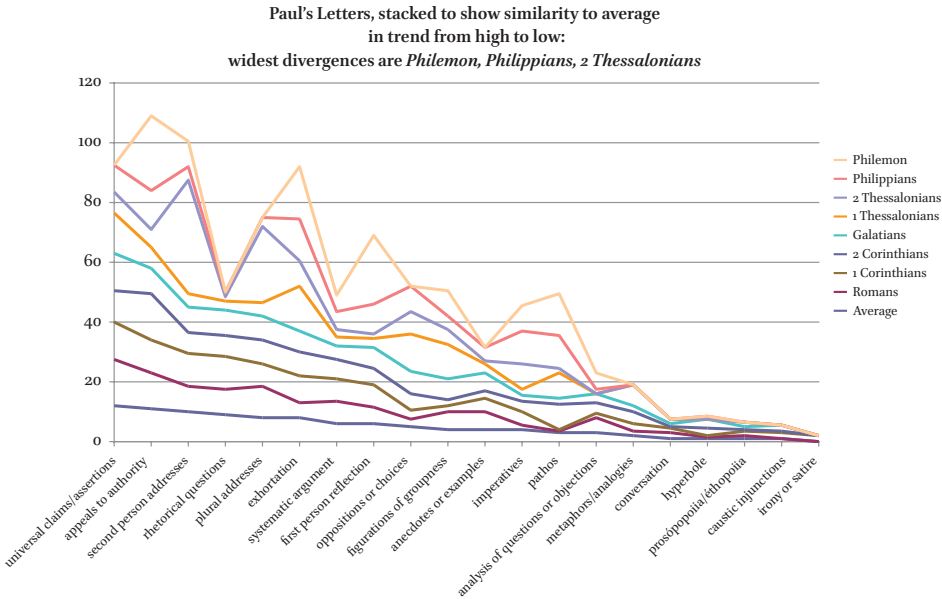


FIGURE 3.3

Specific Textual Data: Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus

Range of occurrences for each characteristic in each letter, in total number and as percentage of total

Characteristic	Romans	1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	Galatians	1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	Philippians	Philemon
universal claims or assertions	50-51/ 15-16%	44-50/ 11-14%	19-23/ 8-13%	16/12-13%	8-9/11-16%	4/5-9%	5-8/6-12%	
appeals to authority	38-41/ 11-13%	39-46/ 9-13%	28-33/ 12-19%	11/8-9%	4-5/5-9%	2-4/3-9%	9-10/11- 15%	1-4/6- 44%
conversation	7/2%	6-8/1-2%	1/0-1%	1/1%	1/1-2%			
prosōpopoia/ éthopoiia	4/1%	4-7/1-2%	1/0-1%	1/1%	1/1-2%			
rhetorical questions	27/8-9%	42/10-12%	14/6-8%	11/8-9%	2/3%	1/1-2%	1/1-2%	
metaphors/analogies	5/1-2%	10-12/2-3%	6-8/3-5%	2-3/2%	4-5/5-9%			
anecdotes or examples	19/6%	16-17/4-5%	5-6/2-3%	8/6%	1-3/1-5%	0-1/0-2%	1-5/1-8%	
imperatives	4-6/1-2%	12-23/3-6%	4-9/2-5%	3/2%	1-2/1-3%	3-6/4-13%	8/10-12%	1/6-11%
exhortation	16/5%	33-35/8-10%	13-17/ 6-10%	9/7%	8-11/11-19%	3-6/4-13%	10/13-15%	2/13-22%
caustic injunctions		5-10/1-3%	1-2/0-1%	3/2%				

(cont.)

Characteristic	Romans	1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	Galatians	1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	Philippians	Philemon
pathos	1-4/0-1%	2-4/0-1%	13-19/ 6-11%	2-3/2%	4-7/5-12%	1/1-2%	8/10-12%	1-2/ 6-22%
irony or satire	0-1/0%	1/0%	3-5/1-3%					
hyperbole	1-4/0-1%	0-2/0-1%	3-7/1-4%	4/3%			0-1/0-2%	
oppositions or choices	7-8/2-3%	12/3%	8-13/3-8%	10/7-8%	7-9/9-16%	3-5/4-11%	6/8-9%	
figurations of groupness	18-21/5-7%	7-9/2%	3-6/1-3%	8-10/6-8%	7-8/9-14%	1-4/1-9%	3/4-5%	1/6-11%
second person addresses	27/8-9%	43/10-12%	13/6-8%	11/8-9%	4/5-7%	22/29-47%	3/4-5%	1/6-11%
plural addresses	34/10-11%	28/7-8%	15/7-9%	9-12/7-9%	3/4-5%	6-20/8-43%	2/3%	
first person reflection	16-18/5-6%	28-30/7-8%	11/5-6%	9/7%	2/3%	1/1-2%	7/9-11%	2-3/ 13-33%
questions or objections	16/5%	6/1-2%	5-9/2-5%	4/3%			1/1-2%	0-1/ 0-11%
systematic argument	24-26/7-8%	26-31/6-9%	6-17/3-10%	6/4-5%	1-3/1-5%	0-2/0-5%	2-6/3-9%	0-1/ 0-11%

FIGURE 4.1

Characteristics, high to low	Total low	Total high	Low %	High %	Average %	Simple average
universal claims/assertions	146	161	0.107195301	0.1390328152	0.1231140581	12
appeals to authority	132	154	0.0969162996	0.1329879102	0.1149521049	11
second person addresses	16	18	0.0117474302	0.0155440415	0.0136457359	1
rhetorical questions	11	14	0.0080763583	0.01208981	0.0100830842	1
plural addresses	98	98	0.0719530103	0.0846286701	0.0782908402	9
exhortation	27	33	0.0198237885	0.0284974093	0.0241605989	2
systematic argument	50	59	0.0367107195	0.0509499136	0.0438303166	4
first person reflection	36	58	0.0264317181	0.0500863558	0.0382590369	4
oppositions or choices	94	106	0.0690161527	0.091537133	0.0802766429	8
figurations of groupness	9	15	0.0066079295	0.0129533679	0.0097806487	1
anecdotes or examples	32	48	0.0234948605	0.0414507772	0.0324728189	3
imperatives	4	7	0.00293368576	0.006044905	0.0044908813	0
pathos	8	18	0.0058737151	0.0155440415	0.0107088783	1
analysis of questions or objections	53	63	0.0389133627	0.0544041451	0.0466587539	5
metaphors/analogies	48	62	0.0352422907	0.0535405872	0.044391439	4
conversation	124	124	0.0910425844	0.1070811744	0.0990618794	10
hyperbole	97	114	0.0712187959	0.0984455959	0.0848321959	8

(cont.)

Characteristics, high to low	Total low	Total high	Low %	High %	Average %	Simple average
prosópopoia/éthopoiia	76	81	0.0558002937	0.0699481865	0.0628742401	6
caustic injunctions	32	37	0.0234948605	0.0319516408	0.0277232506	3
irony or satire	65	92	0.0477239354	0.079447323	0.0635856292	6

FIGURE 4.2

Characteristics, high to low	Average	Romans	1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	Galatians	1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	Philippians	Philemon
universal claims/assertions	12	15.5	12.5	10.5	12.5	13.5	7	9	0
appeals to authority	11	12	11	15.5	8.5	7	6	13	25
second person addresses	10	8.5	11	7	8.5	4.5	38	4.5	8.5
rhetorical questions	9	8.5	11	7	8.5	3	1.5	1.5	0
plural addresses	8	10.5	7.5	8	8	4.5	25.5	3	0
exhortation	8	5	9	8	7	15	8.5	14	17.5
systematic argument	6	7.5	7.5	6.5	4.5	3	2.5	6	5.5
first person reflection	6	5.5	7.5	5.5	7	3	1.5	10	23
oppositions or choices	5	2.5	3	5.5	7.5	12.5	7.5	8.5	0
figurations of groupness	4	6	2	2	7	11.5	5	4.5	8.5
anecdotes or examples	4	6	4.5	2.5	6	3	1	4.5	0
imperatives	4	1.5	4.5	3.5	2	2	8.5	11	8.5
pathos	3	0.5	0.5	8.5	2	8.5	1.5	11	14
analysis of questions or objections	3	5	1.5	3.5	3	0	0	1.5	5.5
metaphors/analogies	2	1.5	2.5	4	2	7	0	0	0
conversation	1	2	1.5	0.5	1	1.5	0	0	0

(cont.)

Characteristics, high to low	Average	Romans	1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	Galatians	1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	Philippians	Philemon
hyperbole	1	0.5	0.5	2.5	3	0	0	1	0
prosópopoiia/éthopoiia	1	1	1.5	0.5	1	1.5	0	0	0
caustic injunctions	1	0	2	0.5	2	0	0	0	0
irony or satire	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

FIGURE 4.3

Characteristic (range and percentage of total)	4 Maccabees	Letter to the Hebrews	Epictetus Discourses	Philodemus On Piety	Philodemus On Death	Philodemus On Frank Speech	Seneca Natural Questions
universal claims or assertions such as about the gods	16-22/9-16%	52-57/ 14-17%	67-130/3-6%	10-17/ 5-10%	8-30/2-11%	2-4/0-1%	11-12/8-10%
appeals to authority	9-12/5-9%	33-36/ 9-11%	102-114/4-5%	24-25/ 11-15%	13-26/ 3-10%	19-22/4-7%	3/2%
conversation	3/2%		149-162/6-7%	2-3/1-2%		0-1/0%	2-4/1-3%
prosôpopoia/ êthopoia	3-8/2-6%		44-92/2-4%	0-1/0-1%	0-1/0%	1-2/0-1%	3/2%
rhetorical questions	7-12/4-9%	16/4-5%	346-348/ 13-15%	0-1/0-1%	12-15/3-6%	7-12/2-4%	14/10-11%
metaphors/analogies	7-8/4-9%	13-14/3-4%	36-48/1-2%	1-3/0-2%	1/0%	11-13/2-4%	2-4/1-3%
anecdotes or examples	14-15/8-11%	26/7-8%	246-253/ 10-11%	5-13/2-8%	56-61/ 14-23%	103-118/ 23-35%	8-9/6-7%
imperatives	1-4/1-3%	11-12/3-4%	36-79/1-4%	0-1/0-1%		1-3/0-1%	0-1/0-1%
exhortation	3-5/2-4%	24-26/6-8%	182-208/7-9%	1-3/0-2%	2-3/1%	12-17/3-5%	7-8/5-7%
caustic injunctions	3-5/2-4%	0-1/0%	75-100/3-4%	10-16/5-10%	10-23/ 3-9%	4-11/1-3%	1/1%
pathos			0-4/0%	0-1/0-1%	3-18/1-7%		

(cont.)

Characteristic (range and percentage of total)	4 Maccabees	Letter to the Hebrews	Epictetus Discourses	Philodemus On Piety	Philodemus On Death	Philodemus On Frank Speech	Seneca Natural Questions
irony or satire	1-3/1-2%		51-68/2-3%	1-2/0-1%	2-4/1%	0-2/0-1%	1/1%
hyperbole	1-2/1%		5-19/0-1%	0-2/0-1%	0-1/0%		
oppositions or choices	8-11/4-8%	27-30/7-9%	152-156/6-7%	12-16/6-10%	16-24/4-9%	39-49/9-15%	6/4-5%
figurations of groupness	11-13/6-10%	20-26/5-8%	88-100/3-4%	34-36/16-22%	33-44/8-16%	79-96/18-29%	2-6/1-5%
second person addresses	3/2%	32/8-9%	103/4-5%		2/1%	3-4/1%	17/12-14%
plural addresses	12-15/7-11%	41-48/11-14%	125-126/5-6%	15/7-9%	28/7-10%	26-29/6-9%	15/11-12%
first person reflection	9/5-7%	3-4/1%	51-54/2%	11-12/5-7%	5/1-2%	1/0%	7/5-6%
analysis of questions/objections	6-7/3-5%	4/1%	205-211/8-9%	2-5/1-3%	23-42/6-16%	8-18/2-5%	17/12-14%
systematic argument	19-22/11-16%	40-48/11-14%	196-203/8-9%	36-41/17-25%	54-69/14-26%	20-43/5-13%	9/6-7%

FIGURE 4.4

Characteristic (range and percentage of total)	Philodemus On Rhetoric	Philodemus On Poems	Aelius Aristides' Panathenaicus	Damascus Document	Epictetus Encheiridion	Epictetus Fragments
universal claims or assertions such as about the gods	0-3/0-1%	9-10/2-4%	45-46/22-24%	32-40/14-29%	8-12/3-5%	13-15/10-17%
appeals to authority	31-34/8-11%	15-26/4-10%	7-8/3-4%	39-40/17-19%	9-10/3-4%	7-8/5-9%
conversation		0-50/0-19%			2-3/1%	3-4/2-4%
prosōpopoia/éthopoia					0-9/0-4%	1-3/1-3%
rhetorical questions	19/5-6%	7/2-3%	5/2-3%	1/0%	11-12/4-5%	10/7-11%
metaphors/analogies		5-8/1-3%	20-21/10-11%	9/4%	3/1%	1/1%
anecdotes or examples	29-38/7-12%	53-58/14-22%	32-35/16-18%	23-25/10-12%	32-35/11-15%	17/13-19%
imperatives		1/0%		5-6/2-3%	21-37/7-16%	1-4/1-4%
exhortation	4-12/1-4%	2-4/1%	1/0-1%	18-28/8-13%	44-45/15-20%	7-14/5-16%
caustic injunctions	11-29/3-10%	5-14/1-5%	1/0-1%	4-5/2%	3-7/1-3%	0-2/0-2%
pathos	6-22/2-7%	0-1/0%				
irony or satire	4-13/1-4%	2-3/1%			1-4/0-2%	3-4/2-4%
hyperbole	2-6/1-2%	0-4/0-1%	1/0-1%			0-1/0-1%
oppositions or choices	5-10/1-3%	8-16/2-6%	7/3-4%	29/13-14%	28-31/10-14%	12/9-13%
figurations of groupness	24-32/6-10%	27-30/7-11%	3-4/1-2%	41/18-20%	6-8/2-4%	6/4-7%

(cont.)

Characteristic (range and percentage of total)	Philodemus On Rhetoric	Philodemus On Poems	Aelius Aristides' Panaethenaicus	Damascus Document	Epictetus Encheiridion	Epictetus Fragments
second person addresses	2/1%		10/5%	4/2%	37/13-16%	2-10/1-11%
plural addresses	46/11-15%	6-8/2-3%	8/4%	1/0%	7-8/2-4%	10/7-11%
first person reflection	15-16/4-5%	3-4/1%	26/13%	2/1%	1-2/0-1%	2/1-2%
analysis of questions/ objections	43-48/11-16%	73-78/19-29%	1/0-1%		3-7/1-3%	3-5/2-6%
systematic argument	64-71/16-23%	52-59/14-22%	28-30/14-15%	11-18/5-9%	14-22/5-10%	5-8/4-9%

FIGURE 4.5

Characteristic (range and percentage of total)	Dio Chrysostom Oration 12	Dio Chrysostom Oration 14	Dio Chrysostom Oration 15	Pliny the Younger Letters
universal claims or assertions such as about the gods	23-30/6-10%	3-5/2-4%	3-5/2-3%	10-36/1-5%
appeals to authority	33-44/9-14%	2/1-2%	8-9/4-5%	30-43/3-6%
conversation	0-2/0-1%	14/10-11%	15/8-9%	31-45/3-7%
prosōpopoia/éthopoia	3/1%			14-35/1-5%
rhetorical questions	16-18/4-6%	8/6%	13-15/7-9%	86-89/8-13%
metaphors/analogies	22/6-7%	1/1%	5-6/3-4%	23-25/2-4%
anecdotes or examples	39-40/11-13%	21/16-17%	26/14-15%	65-68/6-10%
imperatives	3-5/1-2%			45-53/4-8%
exhortation		0-1/0-1%		53-96/5-14%
caustic injunctions	2-3/1%	0-2/0-2%	3-5/2-3%	6-16/1-2%
pathos	5-8/1-3%		0-1/0%	20-50/2-7%
irony or satire	2-4/1%	1-4/1-3%	5-8/3-5%	12-23/1-3%
hyperbole	5-7/1-2%	1-2/1-2%	3-5/2-3%	11-30/1-4%
oppositions or choices	9/2-3%	8-9/6-7%	6-8/3-5%	37-42/4-6%
figurations of groupness	24-26/6-9%	9/7%	10/5-6%	17-25/2-4%
second person addresses	17-24/4-8%	5/4%	21/11-12%	0-100/0-15%

(cont.)

Characteristic (range and percentage of total)	Dio Chrysostom Oration 12	Dio Chrysostom Oration 14	Dio Chrysostom Oration 15	Pliny the Younger Letters
plural addresses	32–35/9–11%	7/5–6%	10–11/5–6%	33/3–5%
first person reflection	44–62/12–20%	9/7%	19/10–11%	115–118/11–17%
analysis of questions/objections	4–5/1–2%	16/12–13%	12/6–7%	42–48/4–7%
systematic argument	22–24/6–8%	20/15–16%	12/6–7%	37–47/4–7%

FIGURE 4.6

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